

Philosophy of Community Development

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Rooted in the belief that the residents of Del Paso Heights have the power to create economic change within their community, the Mutual Assistance Network provides opportunities for individual and community growth that allows the residents to act as guides. Through a comprehensive strategic planning process that involved local residents and community partners, a vision for growth in Del Paso Heights was created that seeks long-term, generational community change and provides a framework for program planning. Known as the Continuum of Change, the approach is based on the principal that in order for a community to advance the resident's lives must be stable enough to allow them to grow individually, while also participating in opportunities to assist Del Paso Heights to move forward. As a method and philosophy for development, the Continuum of Change requires a strong set of partnerships, an infusion of service areas, the ability to measure both successes and failures, and a place for individual and community growth.

Continuum of Change

The Continuum of Change is based on the concept that the population of Del Paso Heights falls within the range of three groups: 1) Several families and individuals live in a constant state of stress caused by a lack of financial and other resources that creates a stream of crisis situations. For these residents, the Continuum of Change offers a variety of programs and services, such as home visitation, designed to promote stability. 2) Several families and individuals live in stable but unhealthy environments due to low-income levels and the social conditions of the community. Because they don't have the distractions of crisis situations, these residents are able to take advantage of the learning and growth opportunities provided within the areas of youth academics and development, personal economic development, and academy classes and activities designed to assist individual improvement. 3) A smaller population is thriving in their personal lives. These residents have the income necessary to live their preferred life-style, provide a healthy environment for their children, and are able to promote community change through civic engagement.

Infusion of Service Areas

The Continuum of Change incorporates the practices of conventional economic, family, youth and community organizing services to encourage growth. Using the knowledge that thriving communities have several strong components, the infusion of service areas allows both the individual and community to simultaneously improve the economic, academic, social and physical quality of life.

Partnerships

With the belief that no one agency has the capacity to provide all of the services needed to build a thriving community, the Mutual Assistance Network sees partnerships as an essential ingredient of the Continuum of Change. Through public, private and community partners, the residents are able to receive information from experts in the areas of economic development, academic achievement, child development, health and nutrition, and many others.

Measuring Success and Failures

To ensure that the community is changing in the right direction, the Mutual Assistance Network has established a number of long-term measurable outcomes that are generally associated with prosperous communities. These outcomes include items like home ownership, academic achievement and income levels, and are being used as a barometer for success. By maintaining accurate data about individual and community changes, the Mutual Assistance Network is able to monitor the type of progress that is occurring, adjust existing services and add new services when necessary.

A Place For Individual And Community Growth

The Continuum of Change model is designed to allow residents to join at any point along the continuum. Residents that are in crisis or thriving have the opportunity to grow individually and to help Del Paso Heights move forward. To support this concept, services are offered in environments and locations that are comfortable to the residents, including school campuses, community centers and in the home. The opportunities for individual and community development through the Mutual Assistance Network include: YOUTH Academic Tutoring Mentoring Sports Leagues Recreational Activities Community Improvement Projects FAMILY Home Visitation Prenatal Care Child Development Drug and Alcohol Support Physical Health and Nutrition ECONOMIC Employment Services Business Development Financial Planning Tax Preparation Home Ownership Preparation COMMUNITY Business Association Neighborhood Association Farmers Market Parent Teacher Association Educational Academies