

Engagement Incentive Grant Final Report –
Bridges for Kansas Families
 Prepared by Elaine Johannes; May 28, 2019

I) Summary of activity

- Thesis of project or need addressed:
 The aim of *Bridges for Kansas Families* is to give “ear” to lived experiences and enhance the many voices of adult family members and their adolescents living in chronic poverty. Using a community-based participatory research approach, this project will engage family members and community partners - who often go unseen and unheard - to address the social issue of family poverty and its impacts. Awareness, educational and scholarly products will result from the project.
- Location of project:
 4 communities in Kansas; state conferences in Topeka, Rock Springs 4-H Center; national conferences in Minneapolis, MN and Billings, MT
- Length of project:
 2yrs, 10mos
- Types of action(s) of the project:
 Project interviews have taken place in Manhattan, Wichita, McPherson and Ottawa.
 Results disseminated at:
 - TWO PRESENTATIONS AT THE KS POVERTY CONFERENCE:
 - Engaging K-State Extension to Support Local Poverty Alleviation Programs (July 2017, **Topeka**; Johannes, Cless, McFarland)
 - Establishing a Poverty Reduction Network for Kansas: Stronger Ground (July 2018, **Topeka**; Johannes, Curtis, Rose)
 - ONE RESEARCH PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS CONFERENCE:
 - Addressing Family Poverty Through Integrative Community-Based Participatory Research (Nov. 2017, **Minneapolis, MN**; Cless, Johannes, Olsen)
 - PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE:
 - Presentation on resilience and hardiness findings at Stronger Ground state retreat (Feb. 2018, **Rock Springs 4-H Center, Junction City, KS**; Cless, Johannes)
 - ONE APPLIED RESEARCH/TRANSLATION PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL EXTENSION VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE
 - *I See You: Training for volunteers who choose to work in poverty alleviation*; curriculum presentation (May 2019, **Billings, MT**; Johannes)
- Outreach
 - TWO PRESENTATIONS AT THE KS POVERTY CONFERENCE:
 - Engaging K-State Extension to Support Local Poverty Alleviation Programs (July 2017, **Topeka**; Johannes, Cless, McFarland)
 - Establishing a Poverty Reduction Network for Kansas: Stronger Ground (July 2018, **Topeka**; Johannes, Curtis, Rose)
 - PARTNER/STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE:
 - Presentation on resilience and hardiness findings at Stronger Ground state retreat (Feb. 2018, **Rock Springs 4-H Center, Junction City, KS**; Cless, Johannes)

- Teaching (service learning):
No on-campus teaching, but community-based, non-formal training provided
- Scholarly research:
 - MASTERS THESIS - Cless, A. (2017). *Bridges for Kansas Families: The Role of Hardiness and Social Capital in Alleviating Poverty*
 - ONE RESEARCH PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS CONFERENCE
 - Addressing Family Poverty Through Integrative Community-Based Participatory Research (2017, Minneapolis, MN; Cless, Johannes, Olsen)
- Training:
 - TWO PRESENTATIONS AT THE KS POVERTY CONFERENCE:
 - Engaging K-State Extension to Support Local Poverty Alleviation Programs (July 2017, **Topeka**; Johannes, Cless, McFarland)
 - Establishing a Poverty Reduction Network for Kansas: Stronger Ground (July 2018, **Topeka**; Johannes, Curtis, Rose)
 - ONE APPLIED RESEARCH/TRANSLATION PRESENTATION AT THE NATIONAL EXTENSION VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE
 - *I See You: Training for volunteers who choose to work in poverty alleviation*; curriculum presentation. (May 2019, **Billings, MT**; Johannes)

II) Project partners:

- University and Extension partners who provided support for interviews, student support and product development:
 - Greg Paul, Assoc Professor and Interim Dept. Head; Communication Studies
 - Stephanie Bannister, Asst VP/ Education and Personal Develop
 - Adam Cless, Evaluation Program Assistant Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation College of Education
 - Charlotte Olsen, Extension Specialist, Family Systems
- Community Partners who organized interview opportunities:
 - Manhattan contact - Jayme Morris Hardeman, Exec. Director, Thrive!
 - Wichita contact – Janis Cox
 - McPherson contact – Rebecca Lewis
 - Ottawa contact – Rebecca McFarland
- Community Stakeholders who supported state-wide dissemination through conferences and/or trainings:
 - Rebecca McFarland, Ottawa
 - Jennifer Rose, Newton
 - LeaAnn Curtis, Topeka

III) Impacts of the work:

- Conference presentations: three presentations (listed above)
- Training materials: *I See You: Equipping volunteers to build resilience with people living in poverty*. This curriculum has been piloted with 6 Thrive! groups and is being adapted for

other Kansas communities through the Stronger Ground poverty network and through members of Extension's national volunteer network.

- Community or organizational changes: Support to establish a state-wide poverty alleviation network known as Stronger Ground

IV) Capacity built to continue work:

- Grant funding: Internal, competitive funds secured to continue Stronger Ground network; Extension funds will support dissemination of I See You curriculum and training.
- Funding community partners secured: Community partners are benefiting from the internal funds that support the on-going meeting and training of Stronger Ground partners

V) Self-assessment of your project:

- Successes: completion of the parent, youth interviews; built capacity for engaged research among of community contacts; utilized findings in Stronger Ground organizational and informational meetings; completion of thesis; pilot of curriculum based on findings from project.
- Challenges: changes in staff and stakeholders in partner communities made completion of the interviews challenging; generalizability of interview findings was limited by lack of diversity among the participants; local programs were experiencing staff and funding changes which challenged continuity and timely completion of elements of the project.

VI) Final budget:

- Will be forth coming from College of Human Ecology; remaining funds may be returned to CECD.