

Center for Engagement and Community Development

Final Grant Report

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I'm happy to report that at the end of two years of activity we have achieved nearly all of our goals and may actually have made advances that I had not anticipated were possible before this work began.

Integrated Internship:

This has been an interesting experience. The idea behind the integrated internship came from Steve Shields. He is a visionary man and his staff has become accustomed to his way of thinking. He sometimes has ideas that he is not able to articulate in such a way that other people can create them to meet his expectations. It would seem that this was one of those ideas. We worked very hard the first year to inform student advisors, recruit students and develop a curriculum. Throughout these efforts we worked with varying people on the Meadowlark Hills staff. We were well into this work when MH hired an education director and we were told to work with her. She never fully seemed to understand the vision but within the last four or five months has begun to hold weekly meetings with any of the interns that are working at Meadowlark. I believe that she has incorporated pieces of the curriculum that we developed.

I asked to attend one of these meetings last week and was disappointed. I arrived at the designated hour to find the students standing in the hallway while the staff person hunted for a television so that she could have them watch a film. Twenty minutes later the equipment had been found and she smashed them into a room that was intended for the use of half as many people. It was always our goal to have this be a self-sustaining Meadowlark Hills activity. We will continue to help with recruitment but they are responsible for content of the education. We are, however, scheduling a long-term care advisory group meeting to make recommendations about additional readings and educational opportunities for interns.

Learning Community Partner Meetings:

Many new developments have occurred in the last six months of the grant. Meadowlark underwent a renovation project and included the addition of a Kansas State University classroom (seen on the next page). Originally the plan was for a satellite office for the Center but much of that design had to be scratched because of budget constraints. However, the new classroom gave us an opportunity to recognize the Learning Lab publically and to get extensive publicity. It was probably critical in allowing us to receive a gift from the Richardson brothers in honor of their mother. This endowed fund is intended to be used for staff development and has become an excellent way to extend the work begun through the CECD grant.



Kansas State Learning Lab at Meadowlark Hills

At about the same time we began having regularly scheduled monthly meetings with Meadowlark Hills administrators. This has afforded us much better communication and collaborative ability. We were able to work together to provide two training opportunities for Meadowlark staff and local community members over the summer. One was an aging simulation that allowed staff members the opportunity to experience some of what their residents might be feeling. The second was a Mind Alert workshop offered by nationally known speaker, Robyn West. Future presentations are being planned with a goal of developing in-service training for MH staff and others—making it a self-sustaining program.

Several months ago we re-invited several of the members of our original CECD task force to visit with us about the development of continuing education credit programs. We got some very valuable information from this group and we are currently proceeding in the development of on-line ceu development as well as those we offer in person at Meadowlark and other Kansas nursing home organizations. We will be submitting a DCE grant for the development of this program. We also hope to go to the Sunflower Foundation to ask for additional funds to continue the expansion of this work.

One of the goals of this proposal was to develop a template that could be used to develop Learning Labs in other organizations. I've learned that this might be impossible as each organization brings such a unique set of challenges to the table. However, we did prove to be very successful and we have a new knowledge base about what it takes to work collaboratively with a service organization. In this arena we would have much to share with anyone attempting to work with other community groups.

We are very grateful for this award. We feel that it more than met the expectations and goals that CECD has envisioned for the Center.

Gayle Doll