

A Campus-Community Partnership for Program Evaluation and Research
Kauffman Entrepreneurship Community Internship Program Proposal 2008-09

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Abstract

In a collaboration between the Kennedy Heights Community Center (KHCC), a graduate student, and an undergraduate Research Methods course, a model for a campus-community partnership for research and evaluation will be developed and implemented. Non-profits have continual needs for high quality research and evaluation methods for purposes of program improvement, reporting to funders and other stakeholders, applying for grants, and public relations. During the 2008-09 academic year and under the guidance of the graduate student, undergraduate students, KHCC staff, and program participants will collaborate in research teams to conduct 6-8 research and evaluation projects. The findings from these projects will be formatted into easy-to-read documents, graphs, and stories for KHCC and into presentations to various stakeholders. KHCC will benefit from the acquisition of research and evaluation findings, the development of research skills among KHCC staff and program participants, and the establishment of a model and relationship for ongoing university collaboration. The graduate and undergraduate students will benefit from the real-world application of research skills, experience collaborating with community partners, and, for the graduate student, experience of developing, organizing, and leading community-based research projects.

Purpose of the project

Non-profits like the Kennedy Heights Community Center (KHCC) have continual needs for high quality research and evaluation for purposes of program improvement, reporting to funders and other stakeholders, applying for grants, and general public relations. Higher education institutions like UW-Madison often have the time, resources, and tools required to obtain high quality research and evaluation data that many non-profits lack. Although a match between the needs of the community and the resources of higher education is apparent, establishing collaborative partnerships that align such needs and resources is a difficult task. In this project, we will develop and implement a model of campus-community partnership to create and sustain such a match to the benefit of both groups.

KHCC, based in the Kennedy Heights neighborhood on the north side of Madison, seeks to create a community support network for low to moderate income families, to increase available resources and programs to improve the lives of residents, and to develop and present social, educational, recreational and cultural programs for children, youth, and adults. KHCC serves a highly diverse population, with approximately 55% of the local community identifying as Hmong, 35% African American, and growing numbers of Latinos. 96% of the local community is low-income. The center offers community families a number of programs and services: early childhood education, an after school program, a food pantry, Asian Outreach, Girl Neighborhood Power, a youth program, and Adult Outreach. Much of the center's programming is funded by grants and KHCC has high need for continual communication with funders about program outcomes and research-based plans for programming. Alyssa Kenney, Executive Director, identifies the following as current community needs for research and evaluation:

1. Qualitative stories of the center's impact on individuals and families for use in press releases, grant applications, newsletter articles, donation requests, and to generally tell the story of the center better to the world.
2. Better access to high quality research data.

3. Improved strategies for the measurement of outcomes to report to funders that are both methodologically valid and user-friendly for center staff.
4. Using measured outcomes to create meaningful systems of quality improvement, for example, through comparison with national benchmarks in particular program areas.

Amy Hilgendorf is a doctoral student in the department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) at the UW-Madison. She is committed to engaged scholarship and university outreach and has taken courses in community-based research and participated in applied research projects in the Madison area. Prior to graduate school, she served as an AmeriCorps *VISTA volunteer with the University of Wisconsin-Extension and worked to facilitate campus-community partnerships across the state. In the Fall and Spring 2008-09 semesters, Amy will be teaching one section of HDFS 425: Research Methods for undergraduate students. As part of this course, students work in teams to plan and conduct small research projects.

This project will match the needs and interests of both groups through an innovative campus-community partnership. Under the guidance of Amy and the direction of Alyssa, undergraduate students and KHCC staff, residents, and program participants will work together in research teams to plan and implement projects of research and evaluation. These projects will include evaluations of the youth programs using the Youth and Adult Leaders for Program Excellence (YALPE) evaluation developed by Dr. Shepherd Zeldin, qualitative case studies of families involved in KHCC activities, community needs assessments for further program planning, and other research and evaluation as prioritized.

Major activities

This project will entail the following activities:

- *Identifying research and evaluation priorities.* This list will include 5-6 small research projects (approx. 3 per semester) to be carried out by the research teams of undergraduates and KHCC staff/residents/participants, as well as 1-2 larger projects that could be pursued by Amy and

select members of the research teams. Amy and Alyssa will develop the list and prioritize the projects in consultation with KHCC's Board of Directors and professors Shepherd Zeldin and Jeffrey Lewis, who will consult with Amy as part of an independent study.

- *Forming and training of research teams.* Each team will be comprised of 2-4 undergraduate students enrolled in HDFS 425: Research Methods and 1-2 KHCC staff members, residents, or program participants. The undergraduate students will be trained to conduct research during twice weekly class meetings. Dr. Randy Stoecker, who has experience conducting community-based research projects with undergraduate classes, will consult with Amy to guide the undergraduates in the research. KHCC research team members will be recruited in presentations with KHCC staff and residents, and at program sessions. KHCC team members will be offered a stipend of \$50 each for their participation in the research teams. They will be trained in special training sessions facilitated by Amy and Jeffrey Lewis held at KHCC at times convenient to participants. Research teams will be formed based upon the interests and abilities of the undergraduates and the KHCC team members. Once research teams are formed, one group session led by Amy and Jeffrey will be held at KHCC to introduce team members, facilitate team cohesion, and lay out plans for project completion. (Note: Approximately one-half of the undergraduates in HDFS 425 will participate in research projects with KHCC each semester; the other half will pursue research projects of their own design. This decision was made to involve the undergraduates who are most motivated and capable of meeting the responsibilities of working with a community partner, including the time, travel, and negotiation required. We feel this will help insure high quality projects.)

- *Planning and conducting research and evaluation projects.* From October-November 2008 in the fall semester, and February-April 2008 in the spring semester, research teams will complete their research projects. Under the guidance of Amy, the research teams will form research questions, select methodologies, gather quantitative and qualitative data, analyze data, determine findings, and translate those findings into reports and presentations that are useful to KHCC. Various methodologies will be applied depending on the purposes of the projects, and various forms of formal and informal dissemination will be pursued to share the data with multiple

stakeholders (e.g., KHCC's Board of Directors, UW-Madison and HDFFS, community residents, grant funders, and other community centers).

- *Documenting the process and planning for sustainability.* Throughout the project, Amy and Alyssa will maintain a binder that documents the emerging process. All research teams will evaluate their team process and the success of their projects and this information will be used for further project improvement. In the spring of 2008, Amy and Alyssa will meet with and present to both KHCC's Board of Directors and HDFFS to determine how a long-term collaboration between the center and the HDFFS 425: Research Methods course could be established. The research findings and tools used in the research projects will be uploaded on to KHCC's website for future use by both KHCC and other interested groups.

Timeline

- Aug 2008
 - Amy & Alyssa identify research and evaluation priorities; plan project
 - Amy & Alyssa present to KHCC's Board of Directors to introduce project and identify research priorities
- Sept 2008
 - HDFFS 425: Research Methods course begins; training undergraduates
 - Amy & Jeffrey present to KHCC staff and residents, and at program sessions to recruit research team members
 - Amy & Jeffrey train KHCC team members
 - Research teams formed; Amy & Jeffrey facilitate group session to introduce teams, facilitate team cohesion, and plan for projects
- Oct 2008
 - Research teams clarify research questions, select methods, collect data
 - Research teams meet biweekly on-site at KHCC (at a minimum) to work with KHCC team member and to gain a better understanding of the community
 - Amy consults with teams to assist their research
- Nov 2008
 - Research teams continue to collect data, meet biweekly, consult with Amy
 - Research teams begin data analysis and make preliminary findings
- Dec 2008
 - Research teams continue analysis, meet biweekly, consult with Amy

- Research teams finalize findings and prepare documents and presentations
- Research teams evaluate the process and their projects; Amy & Alyssa reflect on the process and plan for the next semester
- Amy & Alyssa present project to KHCC's Board of Directors and HDFS and begin discussions of long-term collaboration

Jan-May 2009 (Repeat September-December 2008 timeline for spring semester)

- May 2009 - Amy & Alyssa present project to KHCC's Board of Directors and HDFS and plan for a long-term collaboration

Benefits of the project

This project will yield significant benefits to both partnering groups:

KHCC will

- receive findings formatted into easy-to-read documents, graphs, stories, and presentations for 6-8 research projects conducted over the academic year
- build internal capacity for research and evaluation through the development of research skills and experience among KHCC staff, residents, and program participants
- gain a model for collaboration and a sustainable relationship with a UW-Madison class for ongoing research and evaluation

UW-Madison undergraduate and graduate students will

- develop research and evaluation skills by conducting community-based applied research
- gain experience collaborating with community partners
- broaden understanding of the diversity of communities in the Madison area
- build a relationship between UW-Madison and a community partner that can lead to further partnerships, both for the students and others in the university
- establish a model for community-based research class projects led by graduate students
- (for the graduate student) develop knowledge and skills for designing, organizing, conducting, and leading community-based research

Budget

All budgeted items will be funded in-kind or through the Kauffman program stipend awarded to Amy Hilgendorf.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Projected Cost</u>
Travel	
Undergraduates to KHCC, \$35 travel stipend X 6 research teams	\$210
Amy Hilgendorf to KHCC	100
Stipends	
\$50 stipend X 6 KHCC team members	300
Supplies & equipment (in-kind by HDFS department)	
For research (e.g., paper, audio recorders, computer use, books)	In-kind
For trainings & presentations (e.g., copies, computer & projector use)	In-kind
Food for participants	200
Consultation	
Dr. Shepherd Zeldin, HDFS/UW-Extension	In-kind
Dr. Jeffrey Lewis, HDFS/UW-Extension	In-kind
Dr. Randy Stoecker, Rural Sociology/UW-Extension	In-kind
Total projected cost:	\$810