

Hickman County Spotlight for CoP Call
November 25, 2024
Q&A

Responses provided by:

Mary Flagg – Bernard Community Center
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Pete Tibbs – Pleasantville Community Center

1. Was it as simple as getting the community center folks invited to the Health Council to get the ball rolling?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Mostly it was a simple process to get the Community Center Board members involved to get the ball rolling due to the huge benefits to our Center that would allow us to implement programs and services to community members.
- **Nunnelly Community Center** - I remember that at one of the first meetings of the 5 (five) centers, I had invited Lori Pullen to be there and talk about her new program at church, Infinity Safe Place (ISP). She spoke very passionately about what was happening and the students who were attending. Their mental health improved a little with each meeting as they had a hot meal, talked with other students and built trust with adult volunteers. The group was interested in the program and, through brainstorming, we came up with some ideas that might work with each community center. I believe that was when you and Autumn and others saw the potential for a possible grant opportunity that would start with creation of questions to ask on a needs assessment. So, it WAS as simple as getting the leadership of each center in a room and brainstorming ways to help students with mental health issues. We also realized each community center had different strengths and weaknesses in their leadership and facility.

2. What pieces of each community center project has the community found most exciting?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Currently, at Bernard Community Center the expansion of our Infinity Safe Place (ISP) program for youth has seen the most excitement due to improving the seating area, purchasing more age-appropriate games for indoor play, purchasing tools and supplies for painting and cooking classes, as well as providing a different theme monthly. Such as; what is bullying, how to make cookies that are healthy and yummy, guest speakers to share information on addiction, responsible cell phone use and how smoking/vaping affects healthy brain development.
- **Nunnelly Community Center** - At Nunnelly, it has been exciting to figure out what we need in order to facilitate the effectiveness of ISP and the effectiveness of our

facility to meet the needs of the families in our community who depend on the center as a meeting place for events. The CARES grant money was a wonderful asset for our community center improvements. Most exciting was the high-speed internet, big screen TV, laptops, printer for student access during meetings. Also nice storage units to organize food for the meals which are prepared by an adult with student assistance. A big gas grill enables students to help cook hamburgers and hot dogs for their meetings and events. In the gym, the upgrades on the heat and air, basketball goals and improved restrooms and concession stand make this a standalone meeting place.

- **Pleasantville Community Center** – The biggest response has been the exercise (i.e., stretching, walking, cardio) program, which is open to anyone and is facilitated by a local firefighter who served in the military. Another has been the fun activity (i.e., Pictionary, bingo, playground) nights for age 50+ and ages 5 -15, separate nights. The exercise program and activity nights will resume in early 2025.

3. Are there other organizations who are volunteering services in the community centers, and which ones are they?

- **Bernard Community Center** –
 - Fine Arts Artist Julia Clark, owner of Just Be You Studios – ISP
 - Narcotics Anonymous
 - American Lung Association - INDEPTH program
 - Deterra Systems - At-Home Medication Drug Disposal Pouches
 - The IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program
 - Family Visitation Space - a collaboration with DCS when family members want to visit their children in foster care.
- **Nunnelly Community Center** - Nunnelly United Methodist Church is involved in ISP meetings. Several volunteers are from NUMC. Jennifer Harris with Ascension St. Thomas Hospital is always available to assist with donated food and advise.
- **Pleasantville Community Center** - Area Fire Departments, Churches (Mt. Zion, Free Spirit, Church of Christ) volunteering time as board members and will help promote activities, Hickman County Health Department

4. How do you promote teen involvement within the community and the resources for them?

- **Bernard Community Center**
 - Facebook and word of mouth among teens for ISP; sharing information at health council meetings
 - Meetings with Hickman County Youth Service Officer -Shelia Griggs to learn struggles and issues that bring youth to Juvenile court
 - Collaboration DCS Foster Care supervisor - Savannah Boshears to assist Hickman County children placed in foster care with temporary safe overnight stay when immediate permanent placement is not available

- **Nunnelly Community Center** - Lori Pullen and others post and hand out flyers promoting ISP. Weekly announcements are in the Community Events section of the Hickman County Times. The teens who attend use word of mouth to get others to attend.
- **Pleasantville Community Center** – Facebook, try to keep activities posted out a month in advance; word of mouth. Getting the word out has been difficult due to some residents who may not have internet or are not on social media.

5. Are there plans for a syringe service program in Hickman County?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Bernard Community Center is not planning a syringe service program at this time due to lack of available staff and or volunteers to manage and implement such a program.

6. What advice would you give to Health Councils applying for grants?

- **Bernard Community Center** - I would suggest Health Councils ensure guidelines and requirements for purchases and reimbursements are clear to meet the needs of individual participants.

7. What was a valuable lesson during your initial grant proposal?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Set realistic and attainable completion dates. Copy all paperwork you submit and ensure you are submitting to the correct individual.
- **Pleasantville Community Center** – Not really a valuable lesson but was impressed with how the community centers and other agencies pulled together for a common goal.

8. You mentioned your needs assessment, but how else did you decide on interventions and what to use the grant on?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Through continuous communication with our Juvenile court system, educators on all levels, seeking advice and/or suggestions from other county leaders and staying informed on the issues our county is struggling with to improve the quality of life for all citizens.
- **Nunnelly Community Center** - Brainstorming is an important tool when a group can discuss a variety of topics and accept or tweak suggestions. Some of the NCC leaders have been involved since 1978 when the center was formed, so we know our community well and know our strengths and weaknesses.
- **Pleasantville Community Center** – Living in the area made it easy to know what the needs were. A lot of residents don't have cell phone service nor access to the internet for school and work-related needs. ISP (Infinity Safe Place)

9. What plans do you all have for the future?

- **Bernard Community Center** - Our goal is to grow our Boxing class for youth in order to increase mental health benefits within that group as well as implement a safe, open, accessible outdoor exercise space to foster family

well-being thereby providing a source for many physical and mental health improvements.

- **Pleasantville Community Center** – QPR and CPR classes to be offered by area Fire Department; partnering with local restaurant/market, new signage, and board members from churches in the community to increase awareness of programs and activities.
- **Nunnelly Community Center** - In the future, we plan to continue to grow the ISP meetings and activities for those teens. One idea is to use the 10-passenger bus donated by the hospital to transport the group to a nearby horse therapy center and take other trips. Plans are being made to teach life skills like cooking, how to do laundry, change a tire, etc.

Other comments:

- **Nunnelly Community Center** - NCC is forever grateful to the Health Council leadership who brought 5 groups together and listened to their ideas. From that, a \$250,000 grant enabled the improvement of all 5 centers. And those improvements will benefit youth and their families to have a better life for decades to come.