

Needle-Moving Community Collaboratives

# Case Study: San Joaquin County/Stockton

In 2004, the City of Stockton was identified as the most violent city in California with a rate of 1,362 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. The broader San Joaquin County (SJC) has long been a hotspot for gang violence and was hit hard in the economic recessions. While Stockton and the surrounding San Joaquin County have many nonprofits and government agencies, historically everyone worked separately with narrowly focused services and different intake systems. The burden of coordinating services fell on the recipients. One study estimated that families literally had to fill out a barrelful of paperwork and travel to multiple different offices to access services.

In the late 1990s, a group of 60 leaders came together to ask why outcomes had not improved for SJC families despite significant resources at the community's disposal. After reflection, the group came together to start the Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin (CPFSJ), a collaborative that brings local services for families under one roof. The approach was a radical departure from the past for a community that had previously acted as if the solution to every problem was to start a new nonprofit. To kick-start the effort, the community brought in Stewart Wakeling, currently a researcher-practitioner at the Public Health Institute with deep criminal justice expertise, to serve as a facilitator and leader.

CPFSJ transformed social service delivery in San Joaquin County enabling 25,000 families to access services easily and get help "where they are." CPFSJ co-locates multiple service providers in neighborhood centers to increase

### Fast Facts:

- **Community:** San Joaquin County/ Stockton
- **Problem:** Hotspot for gang violence and acute financial need
- **Results:** 65% reduction in crime reporting since 2004 in the neighborhood around center
- **Differentiating Feature:** Meaningful engagement of a group of residents and faith-based institutions, the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), to shape programs and oversee center operations
- **Leaders/Lead Organization:** Community Partnership for Families San Joaquin
- **Philanthropic Support:** Local funds

accessibility of services for families. CPFSJ even created a mobile unit to deliver services to more remote areas in San Joaquin County. The centers provide comprehensive, integrated services, including prevention and early intervention for issues such as obesity, truancy, unemployment and education. CPFSJ also developed a common intake form to minimize the administrative burden on families and better share information among providers.

Since their launch, neighborhoods around CPFSJ centers have been making progress steadily. The five centers have deep penetration in their neighborhoods with each supporting around 5,000 families. An extensive survey conducted by CPFSJ suggests that participants realize 25 percent plus reductions in arrests, child protective services interventions, unexcused absences and school suspensions. In crime-ridden North Central Stockton, crime is down 65 percent in the five years since the center was opened there.

**One key thing has made CPFSJ particularly successful in reducing crime in San Joaquin County:**

**Developing community ownership:** *community members as partners and producers of impact*

CPFSJ engaged the Coalition United for Families (CUFF), a group of community residents and faith-based institutions in the early days of the collaborative. CUFF was initially a reluctant participant, having had very negative experiences working with city and county government previously. The courtship was intense and CPFSJ backed up its collaboration overtures with action. CPFSJ collaborated with PACT, a community organizing nonprofit, to run a training program for CUFF. CPFSJ also brought in several private foundations to talk with CUFF and advocated for CUFF with city and county officials.

The relationship with CUFF culminated in the establishment of a new CPFSJ center in 2007 after four years of community organizing and planning. While CPFSJ provided funds and operated the center, CPFSJ put CUFF in the driver's seat. CUFF made key decisions for the Center, hired community residents to staff the Center and served as the Center's advisory board. CPFSJ earned the support of the local community in the process and ended up with programming that was more relevant to the community as a result.

CPFSJ, under the six-year leadership of Executive Director Robina Asghar, continues to develop the capacity of families to serve as forerunners for change in their neighborhoods around issues such as educational disparities, school readiness and attendance, foster care placement and civic engagement.

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## SOURCES

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- "Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin: Fact Sheet." *Community Partnership for Families of San Joaquin*. 2011.
- "Three Year Overview of Community Partnership for Families January 2008 to December 2010." *Community Partnership for Families*. 2011.