

**ANNUAL REPORT 2005-2006**  
**The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

This report summarizes the work of the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families from January 2005 through June of 2006. (Future reports will be issued at the end of each fiscal year.) Included are the Partnership's major accomplishments.

Here are highlights from the report, organized around each part of the Partnership's mission.

**Strategies to Enhance Community Resources**

The Partnership continued its efforts to build awareness of the **Assets Framework** and inspire individuals and organizations to take action. Through dozens of community workshops, recognition of community members who "connect with kids," focus groups with businesses, and even a television show, the Partnership is helping adults and young people learn how to create an asset-rich environment and the importance of such efforts.

A recent- evaluation of the Partnership's **Community School** pilot at Carlin Springs Elementary School indicates positive outcomes in academics, parent involvement, and school engagement. In the 2005-2006 school year, the school greatly expanded its enrichment opportunities for students and outreach and support to parents. The number of parent volunteers has tripled in three years.

**Reviewing and Disseminating Data**

Data from the most recent **Assets Survey** suggests these efforts are working:

- In 2006, more youth (10 percent) report the ideal level of assets (between 31 and 40) than in 2001 (8 percent);
- Fewer youth (10 percent) report the lowest levels of assets (between 0 and 10) than in 2001 (15 percent).

These seemingly modest changes have a potentially large impact on the Arlington community given the tremendous differences in behavior between young people with different levels of assets. For example, low-asset youth are 6 to 20 times more likely to engage in risky behavior.

**Involving Community in Setting Goals**

In spring of 2006, the Partnership convened its second set of community workgroups to identify and recommend strategies for reaching targets for selected indicators found in the **Community Report Card on the Status of Children, Youth, and Families**. These indicators included underage drinking, youth as resources, and positive family communication.

## **Creating a Forum for Collaboration**

Participation in the **Too Smart to Start** program to help young people in 5<sup>th</sup> grade avoid alcohol increased from 850 students and 149 parents at 14 schools in 2005 to 968 students and 156 parents at 21 schools in 2006. An evaluation showed that, after participating in the program, students were more knowledgeable about the harmful effects of alcohol and held more negative attitudes towards alcohol. Both parents and students rated the program highly.

Members of the **Teen Network Board** took on a variety of challenges, including efforts to establish SADD clubs at high schools that lack them, participating in innovative high school transition activities, and launching a Neighborhood Day event just for teens. The members also participated in the County's Youth Transit Initiative.

The Partnership launched the **Teen Portal**, [www.arlingtonteens.com](http://www.arlingtonteens.com), in July 2006, working with the Department of Libraries. The portal replaces an earlier and less comprehensive site with one that provides Arlington teens with the information they have requested since the Teen Summits of the mid-1990s. The site also highlights the talents through articles and reviews written by teen interns and a section that showcases art by local teens.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 2005, the Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families celebrated its fifth anniversary as an advisory group to the County Board of Arlington, Virginia, and the Arlington County School Board. To better serve the Boards, the Partnership decided to prepare its annual report at the end of each fiscal year. This report covers the period from January 2005 through June 2006.

### **The Partnership's Mission**

Over the past 18 months, the Partnership has worked diligently to carry out its mission to provide advice and recommendations to the Boards on ways to improve the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth, and families in our community. The Boards asked the Partnership to carry out these specific tasks:

- Develop a community vision regarding the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth and families with and for the community and include objective measures of success;
- Facilitate community involvement in the development of goals for the health, well-being and safety of children, youth, and families with objective measures of success;
- Develop strategies to attract, increase, and enhance community resources to address identified needs of children, youth, and families;
- Review and disseminate data to the Partnership committees, county and school staff, and the Boards on a continual basis on the status of children, youth, and families, including annual written reports to the Board and periodic reports to the community;
- Create a forum for collaboration among community residents interested in the well-being of children, youth, and families.

## **Partnership Organization**

The Partnership has 24 members: 16 community members and 8 representatives from County agencies and schools. The work of the Partnership is staffed by a total of 3.5 FTEs: 2.5 FTEs County employees: a Partnership Coordinator, an Assets Liaison, and a half-time Teen Web Site Coordinator; and 1 FTE, the Data Coordinator, is employed through the school system. The Partnership also draws on the expertise and experience of the Teen Network Board, 24 young people representing and reflecting the diversity of the County. The Network's purpose is to provide a countywide voice for Arlington teens and to provide youth perspective and input to the work of the Partnership. Members of the Network meet monthly from September to June to work on current issues, share ideas and opinions, and help find ways to make Arlington better for teens and families.

The Partnership Foundation (with 501(3)(c) status), established in 2004, works to identify funding sources to carry out recommendations of the Partnership that require private financial support. Through the Foundation, the Partnership obtained funding for the Carlin Springs Community School, the Arlington Youth Film Festival, and "Hit the Breeze," a Neighborhood Day event for teens.

## **How the Partnership Works**

To carry out its broad and important mission, the Partnership meets monthly to discuss its goals and review progress. Members may also serve on one or more committees that meet separately. The Teen Network also meets separately but works on issues in the same broad areas of health, family, schools, and community.

The work of the Partnership is guided by the Assets model. In 2000, the Partnership chose this model as the framework to guide our efforts toward realizing our community vision: *Arlington is a community where all children and teens know they are cared for and valued and they care for and value each other.* The County and School Boards officially adopted the Assets model to guide their planning and decisionmaking in May of 2001.

The Assets model is a "community call to action" that encourages every individual in Arlington to be part of a collective effort to ensure all Arlington children and teens have the positive things they need to succeed in life. Through years of research, the developers of the Assets model have been able to name 40 positive experiences, opportunities, relationships, skills, and values that form the scaffolding for healthy development.

The Assets model is powerful because it is research-based and measurable (*See Assets Survey results, page 9*). And the research is clear: the more assets young people have, the more likely they are to make healthy, positive choices and the less likely they are to get involved with risky behaviors. Assets levels have been shown to have more powerful determiners to actual behavior of young people than the "standard" characteristics such as socio-economic status, family structure, race, and ethnicity.

## **Organization of this Report**

The 2006 Annual Report is organized around the tasks and functions that the County and School Board have assigned to the Partnership. We hope this report clearly demonstrates the work done by the Partnership to meet the mission assigned to it by the two Boards, and the accomplishments it has achieved to serve the children, youth, and families of the Arlington community.

## **DEVELOP A COMMUNITY VISION**

The Partnership has crafted a community vision with objective measures of success and documented those measures in the Community Report Card on the Status of Children, Youth, and Families. The report card gives a broad and objective statistical portrait of Arlington's children, youth, and families, using 80 different indicators of well-being in four broad areas: Family, Health, Education, and Community. This vision will be complete when community groups complete the task of setting goals for each of these measures, a process that began in 2004.

The first Community Report Card was issued in 2003 and a follow-up Report Card is planned for 2008, with subsequent updates every three to five years. In the interim, the Partnership has explored ways to fill some of the "gaps" in the data that were identified in the first report card. Much of the needed data could be obtained through a survey of parents of young children. A pilot test of such an effort has been completed.

### **Pilot Test of Early Childhood Survey**

Much of the needed data on Arlington children could be obtained through a survey of parents of young children. A pilot test of such an effort has been completed. The Partnership worked with the Center for Survey Research at the University of Virginia to develop and pretest a telephone questionnaire. The pretest showed that such a survey was feasible but somewhat expensive: about \$30,000 for 250 responses. The high cost (compared to the Partnership's classroom-based surveys) is largely due to the difficulty of reaching such parents, who make up only a small fraction of Arlington's population.

*Next steps:* The Community Report Card will continue to be the main way in which the Partnership documents the status of children, youth, and families in Arlington County. The next Report Card will be issued in 2008. It may not be possible, however, to include any additional indicators, as recommended in the first Report Card.

The current fiscal climate makes it unlikely that additional surveys will be funded. We are considering whether to seek grant funding for Early Childhood survey. Another alternative is to conduct the two classroom surveys less frequently (every three or four years rather than every two years) and use the "savings" to pay for the Early Childhood survey.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DEVELOPING GOALS

To facilitate community involvement in the development of goals for the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth, and families, the Partnership has recruited more than 150 individuals and teens to participate in work groups designed for this purpose. Each work group focuses on one of the measures of success found in the Community Report Card.

The work-group process is short but intense, typically requiring members to attend only two or three meetings. In the first meeting, the work group leaders review the available data and ask members to provide any information on existing programs in the County to address the issue. In the second meeting, the discussion focuses on how to accomplish more and reach the targets, in a fiscal climate in which additional funding is unlikely.

The goal-setting process began in 2004 when work groups selected the 16 priority indicators in the Community Report Card (4 in each area), set specific targets for them, and recommended strategies for 4 of them.

In the spring of 2005, the Partnership prepared six-month progress reports on the first four indicators:

- Improving immunization rates (health work group);
- Improving conflict resolution skills among our youth (community work group);
- Increasing minority enrollment in advanced math classes (education work group); and
- Keeping teen mothers in school (family work group).

In three of the four areas, we found that some progress had been made. But little progress had been made in the area of improving conflict resolution skills, largely due to the lack of any accountable organization. In the other areas, significant barriers to progress remained, including:

- The lack of an individual or organization designated to carry out the strategy (such as identifying unlicensed childcare providers or monitoring compliance with recommended immunizations among private providers.) While the stakeholders agreed on a set of steps, in some cases these represented extra work, layered onto existing responsibilities;
- Change would require significant funding (such as staffing for additional child care slots for children of teenaged mothers or creating a full-time Conflict Prevention and Resolution coordinator position);
- Difficulty coordinating across County and School lines and public and private organizations, as exemplified by the immunization strategies. The requirement that children be fully immunized before entering school is a powerful tool in achieving high immunization rates. But administering the shots is done through a variety of private and public organizations. There is no single organization responsible for tracking and improving this indicator.

In the spring of 2006, the Partnership organized the next round of work groups to recommend strategies for three more indicators: specifically, youth as resources (a developmental asset), positive family communication (also an asset) and underage drinking. In addition, we

reconvened a previous workgroup on conflict resolution to brainstorm on ways to move forward. About 75 adults and 5 teens participated in these groups.

*Next steps:* We will continue to convene work groups to develop goals for each indicator. We plan to group related indicators to reduce the number of work groups needed to complete this work. After grouping, we believe a total of about 35 groups will be needed (including the 7 that have met to date).

The recommendations made by each Spring 2006 work group have been documented. The Partnership is currently following up with work-group leaders and will also do a follow-up to see how things are progressing. The next report card will be published in 2008 and will include all targets that have been set to date.

## **DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

The Assets Model is a community call to action that enhances and increases community resources by empowering *all* adults and young people to make a positive difference in the lives of children and teens in whatever way they can. As our survey results show, together we are making progress. But to sustain and improve our progress toward becoming an asset-rich community, we all must continue to build awareness about the power of Assets, mobilize individuals and groups to act on that awareness, and work to ensure that asset-building becomes a way of life here in Arlington.

It is the work of the Partnership to create an infrastructure that will support an increased community capacity for asset-building through collaboration with existing organizations and networks as well as through individual efforts. We continue our work to build awareness and inspire action through:

- Promoting the Connect with Kids Campaign;
- Collaborating with different community sectors;
- Presenting workshops and attending community-wide events (34 presentations and events, reaching hundreds of community members since January of 2005); and
- Developing strategies to promote the assets message more broadly using our website, print and TV media.

### **Connect with Kids Campaign**

The Partnership began the “Connect with Kids” campaign as a strategy to build community awareness around a simple but very powerful idea: All children and teens need adults in their lives. As part of this marketing campaign, the Partnership launched a program to recognize Connect with Kids Champions, those ordinary community members who make an extraordinary effort to connect with young people in Arlington. During 2005 and 2006, 12 community members were recognized as Connect with Kids Champions, including employers, youth program directors, volunteers, teachers, coaches, and parents. Through this recognition program, the Partnership hopes to inspire more adults to make time to connect with kids.

The Partnership has also developed a series of flyers that list simple everyday actions any adult can take to make a connection to children and teens. The flyers are tailored for different audiences (business, faith community senior adults, and parents) and are distributed at community events and workshops reaching hundreds of Arlington community members.

*Next steps:* The Board Development Committee of the Partnership is leading an effort to refine and clarify our messages around Assets. In addition, we remain committed to publicly recognizing community members who do connect with kids, providing practical “everyday” ideas for any Arlington community member to build assets.

### **Business Focus Groups**

The Partnership has been working to increase the business community’s involvement in asset-building. Working with the Arlington Economic Development Commission, a business focus group was sponsored by the Partnership to better inform our outreach to business. The focus group was very successful and identified several ways the Partnership could work with others to build capacity for businesses to connect with young people through internships and employment.

*Next steps:* The Assets Committee of the Partnership will follow-up with businesses and County and School staff to work on ways to implement the suggested strategies in the coming year.

### **Arlington Youth Film Festival**

The Arlington Youth Film Festival is a collaboration between the Partnership and Arlington Independent Media. Now in its third year, the Film Festival has grown in both participation and stature. In just one year, from 2004 to 2005, the Festival grew from 17 entries, involving over 80 young people to 64 entries involving literally hundreds of young people in the film production process. Kyle Osborne, weather forecaster and movie critic for WJLA, Channel 7 served as the host of this year’s festival. This Festival builds the capacity for young people themselves to build assets through telling their stories and sharing their tremendous creative and technical talents with the larger community.

*Next steps:* Planning for the 2007 Youth Film Festival will begin in the fall. Together with Arlington Independent Media, we hope to provide more opportunities for young people to learn the basics of filmmaking, as well as experience an additional outlet for creative expression and public recognition.

### **Families as Community Resources**

The Partnership has made a concerted effort to ensure that parents have the information they need to be asset builders for their own children and the many other children in their lives. We continue to reach out to the elementary school community with monthly articles focused on child development and asset building. These articles are distributed through PTA newsletters and list serves and are also on the Partnership Website.

In addition to working and meeting with PTA groups, we provide a workshop at each middle school for families whose children are entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade to help them better understand the issues they will be facing as their child enters the teen years. The focus is on adolescent development and the importance of asset-building. In the past 2 school years, 10 workshops were held, reaching over 200 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents.

In order to reach more parents with the Assets message, the Partnership produced “Raising Teens, a Users Guide for Parents” in partnership with Arlington Independent Media. This five-part series of 30-minute TV shows is designed to provide information, advice, and support to parents of teens. Guest experts were interviewed by Assets Liaison Mary Ann Moran on topics including adolescent development, parent involvement in school, and positive family communication. The first series of episodes aired several days a week from February through June of 2006.

*Next steps:* In the fall of 2006, the Partnership will produce *Criando Nuestros Hijos (Raising Our Children)*, a parenting series in Spanish. Then, in early 2007, five more shows will be taped for parents of teens in English. The Partnership will provide copies of the shows and a study guide to PTAs and school libraries and counselors to facilitate further discussion among parents. The Partnership hopes to launch parallel marketing campaigns for both shows to make sure as many parents as possible learn of this new resource.

### **Building Capacity through Existing Networks**

To help ensure that the assets message is intentionally infused in the outstanding work already being done with children and families in Arlington, the Partnership Assets Liaison is an active member of a variety of committees and community advisory groups. These include working with the Communities of Concern Committee to develop the Parent Empowerment Conference – a Saturday morning series of workshops for parents, as well as partnering with Parks and Recreation to facilitate a “world café” model discussion with the After-School Network on “Youth as Resources.”

The Assets Liaison also worked with the Neighborhood Day Planning Committee to help bring an awareness of the need to include teens in the Neighborhood Day events. For the first time this year, there was a Neighborhood day event just for teens, “Hit the Breeze” planned by the Teen Network and PRCR Office for Teens.

The Assets Liaison also sits on the Comprehensive School Health Committee, Virginia Extension Leadership Council, the Employment Center Youth Council, the Parent Education Office Advisory Committee, the Healthy Families/Early Head Start Advisory Council, and the Partnership Early Childhood Committee.

### **REVIEW AND DISSEMINATE DATA**

During the past 18 months, the Partnership has collected and reviewed data from the Assets Survey and completed a series of brochures for parents on the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The Partnership administers both surveys in Arlington Public middle and high

schools. Much of the data later appears in the Community Report Card, along with data from vital records, school system records, County agencies, and the criminal justice system. But the Report Card contains only some of the data and the Partnership tries to report the results of the surveys back to the community in a variety of ways. **The 2006 Assets Survey**

In March of 2006, the Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families conducted the third survey of “assets” among youth in Arlington’s public middle and high schools. Since the previous survey, the Partnership had moved beyond basic educational efforts and begun to focus specifically on how to strengthen and build assets. As a result, we hoped to see some modest improvement in the levels of assets reported by young people. **Data from the most recent survey shows that indeed progress was made across a range of indicators, although much remains to be done.**

The survey data show a number of promising developments:

- In 2006, the average number of assets reported by teens was 20, up from 19 in 2001.
- Today, more youth (10 percent) report the ideal level of assets (between 31 and 40) than in 2001 when only 8 percent did.
- At the same time, fewer youth reporting the lowest levels of assets (between 0 and 10). From 2001 to 2006, this group decreased from 15 to 10 percent of youth.
- These seemingly modest changes have a potentially large impact on the community given the tremendous differences in behavior between young people with different levels of assets. For example, low-asset youth are 6 to 20 times more likely to engage in risky behavior.
- Since 2001, there has been a significant increase in five of the external assets and eight of the internal assets. There have been no significant decreases in *any* of the other assets.
- Young people this year also reported improvement in 3 of 10 high-risk behaviors, 2 out of 5 developmental deficits, and in 2 of 8 thriving behaviors than 5 years ago. The other indicators showed no change.

*Next steps:* Complete findings from the Assets survey are being documented in “The World According to Our Kids,” which will be published in October. The Partnership will share findings from the survey on our Web site, in presentations, and in shorter and more focused publications designed for parents, teens, educators, the faith community and other groups. We will continue to emphasize key themes including the fact that all young people need assets and that too few have them. Although much remains to be done, we are heartened by this progress.

### **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Brochures**

In 2005, the Partnership completed a series of brochures that highlight key findings from the 2004 YRBS for parents. Each brochure focuses on one topic, such as teen alcohol use or depression, explains why the issue is important, what the most recent survey data show, and tips for parents or guardians on how to prevent the problem and where to go for more information. Each of the 11 brochures has been translated into Spanish. The information is also available online at the Partnership Web site: [www.arlingtonpartnershipforyouth.org](http://www.arlingtonpartnershipforyouth.org)

The complete brochure list includes the following (with Spanish title in parentheses):

1. **Taking Some Chances:** Findings from the 2004 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (*Conductas de alta riesgo*);
2. **More than Feeling Blue:** Findings on Depressive Symptoms and Suicidal Thoughts (*Más que sentirse triste*);
3. **Under the Influence:** Findings on Alcohol Use (*Bajo la influencia*);
4. **Time to Get Moving:** Findings on Exercise and Physical Education (*Los jóvenes y el ejercicio*);
5. **Shaking Hands with a Closed Fist:** Findings on Fighting and Weapons (*Dándose la mano con el puño cerrado*);
6. **Keeping a Clear Mind:** Findings on Use of Illegal Drugs (*Manteniendo la mente clara*);
7. **Not-So-Healthy Nutrition:** Findings on Diet and Weight Management (*Una nutrición nada aconsejable*);
8. **Cruel Intentions:** Findings on Bullying and Victimization (*Intenciones crueles*);
9. **A Hard Habit to Break:** Findings on Tobacco Use (*Un hábito difícil de dejar*);
10. **Nobody Wants to Talk About It:** Findings on Sexual activity and Use of Contraception (*Nadie quiere hablar sobre el tema*);
11. **Not In Our Town?** Findings on Gangs (*¿Aquí no sucede eso?*).

*Next steps:* The next YRBS is scheduled for the spring of 2007. We hope to update the brochures much more rapidly now that a template has been created for each one. And we will begin to plan how best to distribute the information to parents and other interested and caring adults. We also plan to explore how to get the same type of information back to teens themselves.

### **Gang Involvement Prevention Brochure**

In the fall of 2005, the Partnership received a small grant from the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force to print and distribute the YRBS brochure (see above) on gang membership and attitudes towards gangs. The grant allowed us to print enough copies for parents of each rising 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade student. A cover letter urged parents to read the brochure and talk to their children about the significant dangers of gang involvement. A postcard survey allowed parents to give us feedback on the information.

While few parents (104 of the 2,300 sent) completed the survey, the response from those that did was overwhelmingly positive. Over 90 percent believed the information was important and interesting. In addition, virtually every parent agreed that they would talk to their child about this topic of gang involvement.

*Next steps:* The Partnership will continue to work with the Task Force to help prevent young people from becoming involved with gangs. One suggestion by parents is to expand the brochure to include signs of gang involvement. The Coordinator of the Arlington Gang Task Force will also be providing that information at the County Fair and in presentations to the community.

## **CREATE A FORUM FOR COLLABORATION**

Several exciting projects have grown out of Partnership's efforts to create a forum for collaboration among residents, community service providers, schools, businesses and the faith community.

- The **Too Smart to Start** program brought together the school health staff, counselors, and the police department to help inform youth of the risks of using alcohol and discourage and deter underage drinking.
- The Community School at Carlin Springs resulted from the collaboration of the school system, County agencies, private foundations, businesses, and individual volunteers.
- Teen Network members collaborated with County and school staff as well as local non-profits in their work throughout the year.
- The Teen Portal at [www.arlingtonteens.com](http://www.arlingtonteens.com) grew from a collaboration between the Partnership and local teens who have long advocated for an online site devoted to their needs and interests.

### **Too Smart To Start Alcohol Prevention Program**

The Too Smart to Start program helps young people in 5<sup>th</sup> grade to avoid alcohol use. Students learn about the negative effects that alcohol has on developing bodies and brains, refusal skills and ways to resist peer pressure, and the fact that most young people in middle school do not use alcohol. Students complete before and after surveys to verify what they have learned and parents fill out a questionnaire about the component of the program for adult family members.

In 2005, over 850 students and 149 parents at 14 schools participated in the program. In 2006, that number grew to 968 students and 156 parents at 21 schools. Data from the surveys found in both years that students were more knowledgeable and had more negative attitudes towards alcohol. Virtually all students rated the program as "good" or "better" while parents judged it "very good" or "excellent." A report on the evaluation of the program was prepared for both 2005 and 2006.

*Next steps:* We will examine more closely the evaluation findings before we begin to administer the program in the fall of 2006. Some fine-tuning may be needed. We will also explore whether it is feasible to develop similar workshops for other topics, following up on one of the most common suggestions given by parents in their questionnaires.

### **Carlin Springs Community School**

In 2003, the Partnership selected Carlin Springs Elementary School as the pilot site for a community school approach in Arlington. A community school offers academic, health, and social-emotional supports to students *and their families* through collaboration with community partners and volunteers. These individuals and organizations share their expertise and resources with school staff to create a more effective learning environment and support for families. Most of the activities associated with the Community School model take place at the school but "wrap

around” the regular instructional day. This integrated focus on academics, services, and opportunities leads to improved student learning, stronger families and a healthier community.

Pulling together these resources requires a full-time Community School Coordinator on site. In the spring of 2005, Carlin Springs was awarded a three-year 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center grant to fund this position. The Coordinator works with a Steering Committee consisting of Partnership members, school staff, and community partners and receives technical assistance from the Coalition for Community Schools. In addition, two bilingual Parent Liaisons support the initiative by conducting parent outreach, home visits, and parent workshops, and referring families to community services.

The Steering Committee established the following objectives for the program at Carlin Springs:

- 1) Increase parent participation in the school and interaction with staff so that they can become more effective partners in their children’s education;
- 2) Increase parent skills in English, literacy, and technology;
- 3) Increase access to health, mental health and social services for Carlin Springs families; and
- 4) Increase opportunities for after-school academic and social enrichments for students that complement and reinforce the curriculum.

A mid-term evaluation of the Community School is nearing completion. Data on every student in grades K-5 were entered on tardiness and absenteeism, standardized test results for the 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 school years, hours spent by each student in after-school enrichments and/or tutoring; and teacher assessments on homework completion, participation in class, behavior, and overall academic performance. Data on parents of each child included parent attendance at Back-to-School Night, teacher conferences, parent classes, school events with educational content, and whether the family received a home visit or a referral to community services. The analysis reveals that all the objectives are being met. *It is significant to note that Carlin Springs Elementary made adequate yearly progress in reading for the 2005-2006 school year after having failed to do so for the previous two years.* A great deal of effort on the part of the entire school community made this possible, but the 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs are certainly an important part of this success.

Specific positive outcomes detailed in the evaluation report include:

- An increase in both the number of after-school programs and participation in those programs. In the 2004-2005 school year, 96 students participated in after-school clubs and tutoring. In 2005-2006, 199 students (or nearly half the students) participated in after-school clubs and enrichments and 109 students participated in tutoring. In addition, 60 students participated in after-school programs during the summer school session in 2006. Teachers were more likely to report *significant* improvement in homework completion, class participation, behavior, and overall academic performance among students who participated in after-school programs.
- An increase in the number of parent volunteers, which more than tripled over three years to 42 individuals who donate their time helping in classrooms and assisting with clubs and field trips.

- Stronger connections between home and school for 45 families who participated in the home-visiting program over the past two years. In the 2005-2006 school year, all participating parents agreed that they had a better understanding of the school day and/or were more comfortable talking to teachers.
- A developmental playgroup for toddlers, begun by Project Family (part of the Department of Human Services) was expanded to include a second group in 2005-2006. An average of 20 to 24 toddler/ caregiver pairs attend each week.
- Numerous referrals to community services for medical care (30 referrals, all followed through with appointments), dental care (57 referrals, 44 followed through), vision screenings (234, with 81 referrals for further evaluation) and social services (26, 20 followed through). These referrals were largely the result of expanding the school nurse position to full-time, giving her more opportunity to work with students and their families.
- In addition, the Bilingual Parent Liaison made 149 referrals to community resources for families in 2005-2006.
- The compliance rate of parents and children who were properly belted/seated went from below 50% to over 90% as the result of a Fire Department initiative to build awareness of car seat and seat belt safety at the school.
- Fifty-six parents attended one or more classes in English as a Second Language or computer skills. One hundred thirty-four parents attended one or more classes on parenting skills, health and mental health, and family finances.

Carlin Springs Community School partnered with 29 community organizations in the 2005-2006 school year. These partners provided after-school enrichments, services for families, and donations of school supplies and holiday gifts. In March of 2006, a new partner, the Junior League of Northern Virginia offered a career fair for all third through fifth grade students. Students were able to meet professionals from 16 fields. Each exhibit included hands-on tools and experiences for the students and a “map” of educational steps and the skills needed for each job. This will be an annual event.

Over \$118,000 in funds for the Community school were provided from 2004 to 2006 by a variety of foundations and organizations including a 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant-- Virginia Department of Education, the Gannett Foundation, Commonweal Foundation, Washington Forrest Foundation, the Smith Foundation, the Arlington Community Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families, E\*trade Bank, the Shrewsbury Foundation and Temple Rodef Shalom.

*Next Steps:* Carlin Springs Community School is meeting its objectives. The teacher surveys, test results, and review of the data indicate that the after-school and parental involvement activities are improving student academic performance. More parents are coming into the school, and parents are gaining skills and access to services in the community.

Despite the increase in parents volunteering as helpers in the school, cultivating parent leadership and organizing a PTA continues to be a challenge. Strengthening parent leadership will be a focus for 2006-2007. We will also be seeking ways to offset funding cutbacks in important resources to the Community School, including Project Family, the DHS Bilingual mental health

position, and the reduced availability of the DHS school nurse who returns to half time in the 2006-2007 school year.

### **Teen Network Board Initiatives**

Now in its fourth year, the Teen Network Board strives to provide a community-wide voice for Arlington teens. In September, Network members worked together to compile a list of the major Arlington teen issues and needs, and decided to focus on the following three areas during 2005-06:

- Teen Mental and Physical Health (a continuation from the previous year);
- School and Education (a continuation from the previous year);
- Teen Relationships and Community Involvement.

The Mental and Physical Health committee collaborated with school system personnel and community groups on the issue of underage drinking. The work of the committee included:

- Bringing SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) clubs to high schools where it was not available;
- Creating a link between school-affiliated efforts (such as SADD) to reduce under-age drinking and the efforts of the Teen Network by having representation from these clubs at future Network meetings;
- Developing ideas for future “prom-promise” and other related themes to be used throughout the school year;
- Participating at community workshops and appealing to parents on topics such as under-age drinking, depression, stress, internet safety, and teen dating and sexuality.

The School and Education Committee collaborated with education staff at both the district and school level, focusing on the transition from middle-to-high school. Committee members conducted an informal survey of high school freshmen to better understand the transition process from the student’s perspective. They also compiled information on high school transition activities from Arlington Public Schools personnel.

The group identified several ways to improve the transition process:

- Provide more information and help with high school course expectations;
- Give freshman information on a broader range of sports and club options; and
- Involve more parents in the process and give them more information.

To test their recommendations, committee members worked with counselors at Gunston Middle School to improve high school transition preparation for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. In particular, they participated in the following activities:

- A series of end-of-the-year lunchtime visits from those representing a broad range of high school sports, clubs and special programs.
- An end-of-the-year panel of high school students and staff to present information and answer questions for 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

- An end-of-the-year panel of high school students and staff to present information and answer questions for 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents.

The Teen Relationships and Community Involvement committee collaborated with the Office for Teens in the Department of Parks and Recreation to plan an event for teens, “Hit the Breeze” on Neighborhood Day. This project reflected their belief that the County needs more fun, safe county-wide teen events that appeal to a wide range of young people. Group members helped to:

- Recruit volunteers for the event;
- Invite bands and entertainment;
- Create an event logo;
- Solicit community sponsors to help with event expenses.

In addition to their committee work, members of the Teen Network participated in a number of other efforts and activities during the past year. Network members:

- Met with County and School Board members and staff to share teen transportation issues and participated in the County Board’s Transit Initiative that resulted from this discussion;
- Presented Network information and funding needs at the County Board’s 2006 budget hearing, requesting funding for a part-time Teen Network staff position;
- Helped plan and present information for the Arlington Community of Concern Parent Empowerment Conference;
- Continued to work with Parks and Recreation’s Office for Teens (OFT) to help publicize events and provided advice and feedback to staff on OFT events and publicity materials;
- Updated the Partnership at monthly meetings.

In fall of 2005, Judy Hadden, a Partnership member for six years and tireless volunteer in the community, received a Community Service Award from the Department of Human Services for her work in support of the Teen Network Board. In giving this award, Acting Director Suzanne Eisner noted that all of Judy’s work “...is built on the belief that young people want to be connected to the community they live in, that they have important contributions to make, and that they will be more successful as adults if they have ample opportunities to be active citizens when they are young.” The Teen Network board is making that belief a reality for these teens.

### **The Teen Portal: [Arlingtonteens.com](http://Arlingtonteens.com)**

The Partnership launched the Teen Portal, [www.arlingtonteens.com](http://www.arlingtonteens.com), in July 2006, replacing an earlier and less comprehensive site. The new site provides Arlington teens with information they have requested since the Teen Summits of the mid-1990s. It also addresses many of the suggestions offered by the teens who participated in a focus group conducted by the Teen Web site coordinator in 2005.

In response to long-standing teen requests, the new site includes information about:

- Job, internship, leadership and volunteer opportunities;
- Local events, including an up-to-date teen calendar;
- Crisis hotlines and local services that cater to teens and teen concerns;

- Activities such as sports, youth groups, and art clubs;
- Life after high school (including information about applying to colleges, getting jobs and joining the armed forces);
- Health topics that Arlington teens want to know about, including drinking and alcoholism, exercise and nutrition, mental health, and drugs;
- Public transportation to help teens get to activities and jobs.

To make the site more teen friendly and appealing, a group of teen interns has been working to provide content and guide marketing and content strategies. Working under the supervision of the Teen Web site coordinator, a position that the Arlington Department of Human Services began funding for the Partnership in FY 2003, the interns have contributed content to:

- News and Views – regularly updated stories and commentaries about teen activities, issues and concerns;
- Express Yourself -- featuring creative works by Arlington teens;
- Fun & Games -- an entertainment section that stays up-to-date with teen-written reviews and previews of movies, books, plays, music, games, events, and more.

The Teen Web site resulted from collaboration between the Arlington Department of Libraries and the Partnership. Working together and in conjunction with the teen interns, library and Partnership staff members planned and wrote content, hired an artist to design the pages and hired a company to build the site using the Rhythmyx content management system.

Today, the Teen Web site is in the midst of a major marketing push to make teens aware of the new resource. The effort, organized by the Teen Web site coordinator with the help of the interns, began in August at the Arlington County Fair and will continue throughout the school year. As the site gains in popularity, the Teen Web site coordinator will continue to work with the teen interns to add fresh content to the site (including the Teen calendar) every week. In addition, the site will be monitored to track pages views and other indicators of success.

The coordinator is also working with county staff in hopes of getting approval to add interactive features to the site (including a forum where teens can have online discussions) – a strong recommendation that teens gave during the focus groups. The library will continue to provide content support, technical support through its Web master and financial support by funding intern salaries and expenses as well as a portion of the marketing efforts. The Department of Human Services will contribute the remaining marketing expenses and the Teen Web site coordinator.

## **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP**

As of August 31, 2006, the Partnership has the following members:

### **Community Members**

John Andelin  
Jane Ashley-Heavey  
Bill Bozman  
Dana Carr  
Sharon Davis, Chair  
Barbara Gomez  
Ted Hobart  
Judy Hadden  
Linda Henderson, Vice Chair  
Liz Ryan  
Marion Spraggins  
Deborah Taylor  
Anne Vor der Bruegge

### **County Government Members**

Valerie Cuffee, Department of Human Services  
Linda Harmsen, Police Department  
Kristi Elle Jemtegaard, Libraries  
Laura Lazour, Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources  
Patricia Romano, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court

### **Arlington Public Schools Members**

Alvin Crawley, Student Services  
Jan Siegel, Student Services  
Meg Tuccillo, Administrative Services

### **Partnership Staff**

Kelley O'Dell, Partnership Coordinator  
Amy Graham, Partnership Data Coordinator  
Mary Ann Moran, Partnership Asset Liaison  
Stephanie Kriner, Partnership Teen Web site Coordinator

### **Partnership Committees**

**Assets Committee:** Seeks ways to build the assets framework in Arlington's culture; Oversees the Connect with Kids campaign as a way to engage Arlington community members to build developmental assets for children and youth.

**Youth Involvement:** Works with youth on the Teen Network Board and promotes youth voice.

**Community School Committee:** Oversees the Carlin Springs Community School model.

Board Development: Works to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the Partnership.