

**The Arlington Partnership
for
Children, Youth, and Families**

2006-2007 Annual Report



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2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT
The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families

HIGHLIGHTS

Over the past year, the Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families, assisted by many community partners, continued working toward its vision of “an Arlington where all young people are cared for, valued, and receive the support they need to become contributing, caring adults.” The Partnership plays a vital role in encouraging and supporting Arlington’s leaders to work deliberately and definitively in transforming our community into a place where all young people are valued and their voices heard. It is no small effort, and entails essentially a culture change of attitudes and actions more than financial resources. However, by “joining forces” with county agencies, the schools, parents, businesses, the faith community, and ordinary citizens, we can further our reach to achieve a community-wide network of support for children and families. Here are some highlights from this annual report.

Building Capacity for Asset Building in the Community

The Partnership continues to build awareness and encourage Asset building actions to promote positive outcomes in young people, thereby reducing risk behaviors. The Partnership specifically improved community capacity for Asset building through existing networks by involving young people themselves, through families, and through the community at large.

- The **2007 Arlington Youth Film Festival**, a collaboration between the Partnership and Arlington Independent Media, showcased the tremendous creative and technical talents of literally hundreds of young people with the larger community.
- The Partnership expanded production and outreach for the ***Raising Teens*** series in continued cooperation with Arlington Independent Media. With the Assets model as a framework, this series of sixteen 30-minute TV shows provides encouragement, information, and advice to parents of teens, including a show written and produced entirely by members of the Partnership’s Teen Network Board.
- The Partnership recognized ***Connect with Kids Champions*** to build awareness that children and teens need adults in their lives and to inspire other adults to connect with kids. These awards celebrate ordinary people who are making extraordinary efforts to connect with young people. Among the Champions recognized this year are two coaches, a high school principal, and a youth services program director.

Researching Young Peoples’ Needs

In March 2007, the Partnership administered the third **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)** to 2400 Arlington middle and high school students. The survey asks youth about behaviors that harm their physical or emotional health, including use of alcohol and drugs, sexual activity, depressive symptoms and thoughts of suicide, bullying, gang involvement, and eating and exercise.

Creating a Forum for Collaboration

The 2006-2007 year saw meaningful work continue on a number of initiatives and programs that stemmed from consistent Partnership collaborative efforts to bring together community members, providers, schools, and the private sector.

- An evaluation at **Carlin Springs Community School**, selected by the Partnership in 2003 as a pilot site for a community school approach, revealed that all the objectives are being met and there is substantial progress in academic gains among Carlin Springs students. Carlin Spring was one of three schools nationwide to be selected for a Community Schools National Award for Excellence.
- The **Arlington Teen Network Board** continued to provide a county-wide voice for Arlington teens and to provide youth perspective and input to the work of the Partnership. The Network members accomplished things in several areas affecting Arlington teens, including teen stress, parent-teen communication, and teen events and activities.
- **The Teen Portal: Arlingtoneens.com** provides a vibrant, safe, and reliable way for young people to share their voices and find information. The site features regularly updated teen-written news and commentaries; a calendar of events that lists everything from college fairs to band nights; and alerts about new volunteer, leadership, job, and internship opportunities. The Teen Portal, a collaboration between the Arlington Department of Libraries and the Partnership, was launched in the summer of 2006 and is growing in popularity.
- The ***Too Smart to Start*** program helps young people in 5th grade to avoid alcohol use. In the 2006-2007 school year, 1084 students and 197 parents at 21 schools participated in *Too Smart to Start*. As in the past, the survey data suggest that the program was very successful.
- Partnership staff and members of the Partnership's Early Childhood Committee participated in a collaborative grant application to the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation with stakeholders from the City of Alexandria. The jurisdictions were awarded a **Smart Beginnings School Readiness planning grant** in the amount of \$30,000 cash and other technical assistance to support the formation of a school readiness council that can design and develop a comprehensive infrastructure at the local level that expands, enhances, and supports seamless high quality early care and education.

2006-2007 ANNUAL REPORT

The Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families

Introduction

Imagine the difference each of us could make if we took the time every day to connect meaningfully with a child. Imagine a community where all young people's needs are met and their voices heard. Strengthening the bonds of our community – and providing a network of support for its youngest members - is what the Arlington Partnership is all about.

Over the past year, the Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families, assisted by many community partners, continued working toward its vision of “an Arlington where all young people are cared for, valued, and receive the support they need to become contributing, caring adults.” These efforts included researching young peoples’ needs, advocating for policies and programs to meet those needs, and engaging all members of the Arlington community to use Asset building as the primary prevention framework.

The Partnership’s Charge from the County and School Boards

Our charge from the County and School Boards is *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.

The Partnership’s work this past year has addressed all of these issues, often by “joining forces” with county agencies to further its work and extend its reach.

How the Partnership Accomplishes Its Goals

The Partnership consists of 16 community members and eight representatives from County agencies and schools. The Partnership is staffed by a full-time Coordinator and Assets Liaison and a half-time Teen Web Site Coordinator, all employed by the County, and a Data Coordinator employed through the school system.

The Teen Network Board is a vital part of the Partnership's work. The Network involves over 30 young people from across the County. The Network's purpose is to provide a county-wide 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 identify ways to make Arlington better for teens and families.

The Partnership Foundation continues to serve as a mechanism for private support for Partnership recommendations and priorities. The Foundation has 501(c)(3) status and its board members identify funding sources for initiatives that require private financial support. This year, the Foundation obtained funding for the Carlin Springs Community School and the Arlington Youth Film Festival.

The Partnership's work is guided by the Assets model, which both the County and School Boards officially adopted to guide their planning and decision making. Our vision of *a community where all children and teens know they are cared for and valued and they care for and value each other* has led us this year to "join forces" with the various county agencies represented on the Partnership board in an effort to further our work and priorities without additional resources. It also has enabled us to support staff at those agencies to use Assets as a primary prevention tool in their work and in working with their clients.

Partnership Priority Initiatives

Creating a community-wide network of support for children and families means that the Partnership is committed to a wide variety of issues and programs. In January 2007, the Partnership identified priority initiatives to shape its work and narrow its focus over the next 18 months. They involve:

- surfacing connections between service providers and the Assets model;
- new and continuing advocacy;
- comprehensive and broad-based communication;
- preparing Assets data for specific audiences;
- examining how the Partnership functions with the Teen Network as youth engagement;
- focusing on the Teen Portal; and
- expanding outreach to community members around the Assets model.

In addition to these priorities, there are other ongoing and central initiatives with which Partnership members and staff are involved.

Carrying Out the Charges to Develop a Community Vision and Facilitate Community Involvement in Developing Goals

The Partnership crafted a framework for a community vision with objective measures of success in the *Community Report Card on the Status of Children, Youth, and Families*, which was released in 2003. 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. Over the past several years, the Partnership has invited more than 150 adults and teens to participate in work groups focusing on these measures of success. The goal-setting process began in 2004 when work groups selected 16 priority indicators (four in each area), set specific targets for those indicators, and recommended strategies for four of them. Progress in some of the areas has been mixed, primarily due to recent budget constraints and limited staff resources. Therefore, the Partnership decided this year to assess the structure of the community process, particularly as preparations ensue for the next *Report Card*, which will be released in early 2008.

Next steps: A *Community Report Card* committee will meet through fall 2007 and make recommendations to the full Partnership regarding any changes to the community process leading up to the release of the new *Report Card*, including goal setting. Among the issues it will discuss are the successes and challenges presented by the *Community Report Card* process, who is responsible for follow-up and further action, and how do we encourage and involve the community to “own” the information and next steps. We also will decide whether convening work groups to develop goals for each indicator and propose strategies to achieve those targets is the most effective process to follow.

Carrying Out the Charge to Develop Strategies to Enhance Community Resources

The Assets model is a research-based community “call to action” encouraging every adult in Arlington to make a positive difference in the lives of children. This concept involves changing the community culture and norms around children and adults, shifting from perceiving the healthy development of young people as solely a family or school responsibility to seeing the healthy development of young people as a community responsibility. Our 2006 Assets data shows that together we are making progress and, with a deliberate, sustained community effort, we will continue to become an Arlington where all young people’s voices are heard and their needs are met.

The Partnership continues to build awareness and encourage Asset building actions to promote positive outcomes in young people, thereby reducing risk behaviors. The more we can do as a community to build Assets in our young people, the fewer risk behaviors in which they will engage. Reducing risk behaviors and promoting positive behaviors is a powerful way to enhance community resources. The Partnership continues to build capacity for Asset building through existing networks by involving young people themselves, through families, and through the community at large.

Building Capacity through Existing Community Networks

The Partnership cannot by itself succeed in making Asset building a way of life in Arlington. To ensure sustainability, all sectors and members of the community must be involved in intentionally infusing Asset building into their daily work and their daily lives. The Assets Liaison continues to be an active member of myriad committees and community advisory groups, working to surface the existing connections between the work of the work of the respective committees and Assets. The Liaison gave 25 presentations and workshops during 2006-2007, reaching hundreds of community members with the Assets message.

In addition, the Asset Liaison worked with the Parent Education Program in the Department of Human Services to launch the Parent Education Network to encourage more coordination and collaboration among those providing parent education opportunities throughout the county. In partnership with Arlington Public Schools' Volunteer and Partnership Program and the Arlington Employment Center, the Partnership hosted coffees for the business community focusing on how businesses can promote an Asset-building culture by offering internship opportunities for young people.

The Assets Liaison also sits on the Comprehensive School Health Committee, Partnership Early Childhood Committee, Virginia Cooperative Extension Leadership Council, a subcommittee of the Gang Prevention Task Force, the Healthy Families/Early Head Start Advisory Council, the Coordinated Community Response Task Force (to address domestic violence), and the Alliance for Prevention.

Next Steps: One of the Partnership's priority initiatives for the next year is "creating vehicles to connect the work of service providers and the Assets model to encourage broader ownership of asset building as our community action plan." The Partnership's Assets Committee will be working with the entire Partnership to determine what supports are needed to encourage more ownership of Assets as a community action plan and to explore the possibility of using the Assets model as the primary prevention action plan.

Building Capacity by Involving Young People

The Arlington Youth Film Festival, now in its fourth year, is a collaboration between the Partnership and Arlington Independent Media. This Festival supports young people themselves in building Assets through telling their stories and sharing their tremendous creative and technical talents with the larger community. The 2007 Film Festival included separate middle and high school events to showcase original short films featuring animation, public service announcements, and narratives. The quality and depth of the work was remarkable. Literally hundreds of Arlington's young people were involved in producing over 55 entries for the 2007 festival.

Next Steps: The Arlington Youth Film Festival has great potential for growth by involving more and more young people and improving access to the necessary technology. The Partnership will be working in the coming year to identify more community partners who can sustain and support this event over time.

Building Capacity through Families

The Partnership is committed to supporting families as they work to instill Assets not only in their own children – but in all children. We provide information through monthly articles in Spanish and English for parents of elementary age children, which are distributed through PTA listservs and newsletters. We also continue to offer asset-based parenting workshops for parents of children and teens. Each spring, the Assets Liaison offers a workshop at each middle school for families of rising sixth graders 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. This past spring we offered five workshops reaching over 200 rising sixth-grade parents.

The Partnership recognizes that many parents find it difficult to attend workshops. We therefore expanded production of the *Raising Teens* series that we began in 2006. In continued cooperation with Arlington Independent Media, we produced a new series entirely in Spanish, which aired in fall 2006, and a second series in English, which aired in spring and summer 2007. With the Assets model as a framework, this series of sixteen 30-minute TV shows provides encouragement, information, and advice to parents of teens. Local experts are interviewed on topics that include adolescent development, service to others, family boundaries, making and keeping friends, staying involved in school, and positive family communication.

The second series of programs included a show written and produced entirely by members of the Partnership's Teen Network Board. Teens provided the "expert voice" offering advice for parents on creating positive communication through building trusting and respectful relationships.

Building on the success of these shows, the Assets Liaison developed the *Raising Teens Handbook*, which consists of DVDs of the three series and accompanying study guides. This versatile tool can be used by individual parents or groups of parents gathering informally, as well as in more structured facilitated settings - such as schools or within the faith community.

Next Steps: The Assets Liaison will continue to work with community members, parents, and service providers to build awareness about the *Raising Teens* series and to enhance its usefulness.

Building Capacity Throughout the Community

The Partnership initiated the *Connect with Kids* Campaign as a strategy to build community awareness around a simple but very powerful idea: children and teens need adults in their lives. Two integral components of this campaign are the "Easy Ideas" resource pages to connect with kids, which are tailored to different audiences and distributed at community-wide events and Assets presentations, and the recognition of *Connect with Kids* Champions. Twice each year, the Partnership recognizes and celebrates ordinary people who are making extraordinary efforts to connect with young people. The Partnership hopes that these *Connect with Kids* Champions will inspire other adults to connect with kids. Among the Champions recognized this year are two coaches, a high school principal, and a youth services program director. All of the *Connect with Kids* Champions are listed at the end of this report.

Next Steps: The Assets Committee will develop strategies and identify media partners to better promote and recognize the *Connect with Kids* Champions.

Carrying Out the Charge to Review and Disseminate Data

In alternating years, the Partnership administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Assets Survey in Arlington Public middle and high schools. Every three years, it produces

the *Community Report Card*, which includes data from those surveys, as well as from vital records, school system records, County agencies, and the criminal justice system. The Partnership disseminates this information to the community in a variety of ways. In October 2006, we released the complete findings from the 2006 Assets survey in “The World According to Our Kids.” This fall, we will release findings from the 2007 YRBS.

Report Card Redesign

The production of the next *Community Report Card on the Status of Children, Youth, and Families* is underway. As a first step, the Partnership convened a working group comprised of key partners within the community (e.g., representatives from DHS, the Courts, Arlington Public Schools, nonprofits, and Arlington Economic Development) to recommend suggestions for the design and format of the next report. We hope the changes will make it easier for readers to understand and use the data that we provide.

The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey

In March 2007, the Partnership administered the third Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to 2400 Arlington middle and high school students. The survey asks youth about behaviors that harm their physical or emotional health, including use of alcohol and drugs, sexual activity, depressive symptoms and thoughts of suicide, bullying, gang involvement, and eating and exercise. Final survey results will be available in November 2007.

Next steps: In line with one of the 2007-2008 Partnership priorities -- the *preparation of Assets data for specific audiences (young people, parents, and business community --*, we will share findings from the YRBS survey with the Boards, on our Web site, in presentations, and in shorter and more focused publications designed for parents, teens, educators, the faith community, and other interested groups. We hope also to update the YRBS brochures, which have proven a very successful communication tool.

Carrying Out the Charge to Create a Forum for Collaboration

The 2006-2007 year saw meaningful work continue on a number of initiatives and programs that stemmed from consistent Partnership collaborative efforts to bring together community members, providers, schools, and the private sector.

Carlin Springs Community School

In 2003, the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families selected Carlin Springs Elementary School as the pilot site for a community school approach in Arlington. Anecdotal evidence pointed to its success in all areas – increased parent participation in school activities, increased access to health and social services, and increased opportunities for after-school enrichment for students that complement and reinforce the curriculum.

However, to more objectively evaluate progress toward the goals and objectives of the community school, the Partnership’s Data Coordinator analyzed extensive data on 422 students in grades K-5 and their parents. The evaluation report was made available to community leaders in the fall of 2006, and key findings of the mid-term evaluation were presented to the School Board in January 2007.

The evaluation revealed that all the objectives are being met and there is substantial progress in academic gains among Carlin Springs students. Teacher surveys and standardized test results indicate that higher parent involvement and regular participation in after-school enrichments are improving student academic performance. And family stability, as measured by tardiness and absenteeism, is improved among families whose children and parents are more involved in the community school activities. Families are being linked to needed services offered through community partners.

These results could not have been accomplished without a dedicated Community School Coordinator position, funded through the 21st Century Community Learning Center grant, and without the 30 community organizations working with the school. In addition, in 2006-2007, 42 parent volunteers and 33 community volunteers helped in the classroom, tutored, served as lunch buddies, and helped with clubs and field trips.

Significant new partners for the 2006-07 school year included the Arlington Soccer Association, which is providing on-site after-school soccer 3 days a week for students participating in the tutoring program; the Capital Area Food Bank, which is providing free nutritious snacks for the 250 children staying after school each week; and the Educational Theater Company, which is providing after-school enrichment for students grades K-5. In the summer of 2007, Arlington Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources provided a high-quality summer camp at the school for 35 Carlin Springs students.

Most notable for Carlin Springs Community School, however, is that in June 2007, it was one of three schools nationwide to be selected for a Community Schools National Award for Excellence.

Next Steps: 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 continue to be a focus for 2007-2008. In August 2007, the community school received a *Sharing the Dream* grant from the National Association of Elementary School Principals to help build a stronger parent leadership network. The Partnership is committed to building support to sustain the Community School Coordinator position over the long term. It is absolutely critical to maintaining the program's success and ensuring continued academic improvement. We also would like to convene conversations about other schools that might want to replicate this successful model.

Teen Network Board Initiatives

The Arlington Teen Network Board is a dynamic group whose purpose is to provide a county-wide voice for Arlington teens and to provide youth perspective and input to the work of the Partnership. The Network meets a well-defined community need. In our 2006 Assets Survey, only 23% of Arlington teens reported feeling valued in this community and only 31% reported being used as a resource. If we want our young people to grow into contributing, caring, participating adults, the community must provide opportunities for them to develop their skills (including leadership, listening, organizational, decision-making, social, time management, etc.)

In addition to building these skills, more than 30 teens involved with the Network benefit through building relationships with other teens across the county and with the adults who work with them -- community and staff members of the Partnership and staff from the Departments of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources and Libraries.

During the 2006-2007 program year, the Network worked on several initiatives affecting Arlington teens:

- Teen Stress;
- Parent-Teen Communication; and
- Teen Events and Activities (a continuation from the previous year).

The teens also formed a committee on Communications and Outreach. Highlights from the committees' work appear below.

The **Teen Stress Committee** identified what they believed to be causes of stress among Arlington teens and ways that stress might be reduced. The teens then worked with the Partnership's Data Coordinator to develop a survey to gather information about Arlington teen stress. The teens administered the survey to 500 teens at all high schools and high school programs and the Data Coordinator analyzed the data and discussed the preliminary findings with the teens. The Teen Stress Committee will continue its work during the 2007-2008 school year to disseminate the data and share the findings with county and school leaders.

The **Parent-Teen Communication Committee** focused on developing strategies to improve parent-teen communication. After discussing several ideas, the members decided to work with the Partnership's on-going *Raising Teens* project. In partnership with Arlington Independent Media (AIM), the committee members developed, produced, filmed, and were the "guest experts" in a 30-minute TV show. *Raising Parents* focuses on practical advice for parents on creating positive communication with their teens through building trusting and respectful relationships. The show is airing on AIM channel 69. *Raising Parents* will also be included in the *Raising Teens* DVDs and study guides available to the community in the fall of 2007.

The **Teen Events and Activities Committee** collaborated with the Office for Teens in the Department of Parks and Recreation to plan several events for teens. This committee's work reflected their belief that the County needs more fun, safe county-wide teen events that appeal to a wide range of young people. Events included a teen skate night at the new Kettler ice rink; teen band night at Thomas Jefferson Community Center; and a music festival for teens at Quincy Park. Group members helped to staff the events; conduct outreach; invite bands and entertainment; and create graphic flyers and postcards to attract their peers.

The Teen Network also continued its involvement in the Teen Transit Initiative. The iRIDE campaign was launched in 2007. Several Network members remain actively involved with the Initiative and the Advisory Board.

Next steps: Since its inception, the Network was coordinated by a community volunteer for the Partnership, Judy Hadden. This dedicated volunteer support is ending. However, since resources

are not available within the current Partnership infrastructure, the Partnership continues to look for some possible avenues to fund a part-time coordinator. Clearly, this position needs to be sustainable over time to ensure the continued viability of the Network Board.¹ The Teen Network as it currently is configured provides a well-organized, supportive, empowering structure that facilitates active youth voice, but its success rests in large part on our ability to sustain it with a funded coordinator.

Another of the Partnership's 2007 initiatives is focusing on the continued development of the Teen Network, its relationship to and with the Partnership, and opportunities for cooperation and collaboration with other teen advisory groups within the County. To facilitate this effort, the Partnership convened a committee consisting of Partnership members, Teen Network members, and other members of the community interested in the continuing development of the Teen Network as an initiative of the Partnership. The committee will review and build on the past four years of Network activities, accomplishments, and challenges, as well as ideas brought forward by Partnership members in strategic planning meetings as part of the Partnership's effort to embrace teens as resources and as a vital part of its work. It will then share its findings and recommendations to the Partnership by December 2007.

The Teen Portal: Arlingtoteens.com

Launched by the Partnership in July 2006, the Teen Portal -- arlingtonteens.com -- provides a vibrant, safe, and reliable way for young people to share their voices and find information about anything from health issues to the weekend's events. The site features regularly updated teen-written news and commentaries on topics as diverse as teen drinking and video game gore; a calendar of events that lists everything from college fairs to band nights; and alerts about new volunteer, leadership, job, and internship opportunities.

Overseen by the Teen Website Coordinator, the Portal 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 Website Coordinator in 2005. We are striving for the site to be a complete, "one-stop shop" for reliable and accurate teen-friendly information and a safe place for young people by providing:

- Crisis hotlines and local services that cater to teens and teen concerns;
- Tips about applying to colleges, getting jobs/internships and joining the armed forces;
- Lists of activities such as sports, youth groups, and art clubs;
- Health information that Arlington teens want to know about, including drinking and alcoholism, exercise and nutrition, mental health, and drugs; and
- Public transportation details to help teens get to activities and jobs.

Under the supervision of the Teen Website Coordinator, a staff of teen interns is responsible for much of the site's content and for assisting with marketing the site to other Arlington teens (and for disseminating the Portal's slogan, "For Teens, by Teens").

¹ By way of an update, the Partnership was able to secure private funding through the Partnership Foundation for a small stipend for a part-time college intern this year but there is still a need for more permanent support to coordinate the Network.

Evidence of the site's growing popularity can be seen in the frequent messages sent to the site's mailbox. Teens write asking for more information about various listings they find on the Portal, while leaders of teen-focused organizations often write to include their events and activities on the Teen Portal. We hope that over the coming year, we will be able to begin tracking the number of hits to the Portal as yet further evidence of its use and role as a resource.

The Teen Portal is a 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.

Next steps: The Teen Website Coordinator is now working with consultants and the teen interns to provide more interactive features to the site – including blogs, polls, quizzes, music downloads and podcasts – and to update the design. Other Portal marketing efforts are also planned, including placing mouse pads with the Teen Portal logo at all school and county computers used by teens; hosting a Teen Portal celebration event; visiting high schools to hand out marketing materials and to talk about the Teen Portal; and setting up Teen Portal booths at teen-frequented events. The library will continue providing technical support through its Webmaster 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.

Too Smart To Start Alcohol Prevention Program

The *Too Smart to Start* program helps young people in 5th grade to avoid alcohol use. In separate, but complementary programs, students and their parents 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 surveys both before and after the workshop to verify what they have learned, and parents complete a questionnaire about the breadth and quality of the program they are invited to attend.

In the 2006-2007 school year, 1084 students and 197 parents at 21 schools participated in *Too Smart to Start*. As in the past, the survey data suggest that the program was very successful. Specifically:

1. After completing the program, students generally knew more about the effects of alcohol and had more negative attitudes about use of alcohol by young people.
2. Student and parent ratings of the program were strongly positive. Virtually all parents rated it as good or better and worth taking the time to attend. They suggest increasing publicity for the program and offering more workshops.

Next steps: The Partnership will remain involved in the continued development of the *Too Smart to Start* collaboration, including the contribution of data analysis and the need to continue the parent component of the program.

Smart Beginnings School Readiness Grant

In early 2007, Partnership staff and members of the Partnership's Early Childhood Committee participated in a collaborative grant application to the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation with stakeholders from the City of Alexandria. The jurisdictions were awarded a Smart Beginnings planning grant in the amount of \$30,000 cash and other technical assistance to support the formation of a school readiness council that can design and develop a comprehensive infrastructure at the local level that expands, enhances, and supports seamless high quality early care and education. The Arlington Community Foundation and Strategic Analysis, Inc. provided Arlington's matching funds for the application.

Next steps: The Partnership coordinator will continue to take an active role in the collaborative effort, helping to convene partners from all sectors and engage in strategic discussions. She will keep Partnership members apprised of progress and opportunities to participate in the School Readiness Council and public engagement activities.

Conclusion

The Partnership continues to play a vital role in encouraging and supporting Arlington's leaders to work deliberately and definitively in transforming our community into a place where all young people are valued and their voices heard. It is no small effort, and entails essentially a culture change of attitudes and actions more than financial resources. However, by "joining forces" with county agencies, the schools, parents, businesses, the faith community, and ordinary citizens, we can further our reach to achieve a community-wide network of support for children and families. We look forward to continuing to work with all facets of the community to improve the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth, and families in Arlington as we continue to research young people's needs, advocate for programs and policies to meet those needs, and engage all members of our community.

Membership and Committee Structure

As of June 30, 2007, the Partnership had the following members:

Community Members

John Andelin	Judy Hadden
LaVeta Hayes Charity	Linda Henderson, Chair
Portia Clark	Ted Hobart
Sharon Davis	Joy Rambert
Emily DiCicco	Marion Spraggins
Lynn Dorfman	Deborah Taylor
Barbara Gomez, Vice Chair	Anne Vor der Bruegge

County Government Members

Valerie Cuffee, Department of Human Services
Kim Babcock, 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

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.

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

Early Childhood: Promotes networking and collaboration among providers and stakeholders in the early childhood community.

Community Report Card: Provides input into the structure and design of the Report Card as well as the community process to set targets and strategies around the indicators.

**Our Connect with Kids Champions
2004-2007**

Alonso Abugattas - Connecting with Kids as a park naturalist at Long Branch Nature Center, Arlington Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

Linda Anderson - Connecting with Kids as a Kenmore Middle School parent, volunteer and neighbor.

Arlington Public Schools Facilities and Operations Department Connecting with Kids as a department providing teen internships, mentoring and tutoring.

Bill Cochran – Connecting with Kids through sponsoring the Terrific Parent award, honoring a teen parent each month at Arlington Kiwanis.

Portia Clark - Connecting with Kids as a long-time community activist, caring neighbor and advocate for Arlington teens.

John Eklund - Connecting with Kids through hiring teens at his business, Preston’s Pharmacy.

Paula Endo – Connecting with Kids through the Teen Photo Program and as a volunteer in the Columbia Heights West neighborhood.

Marcia Gardner – Connecting with Kids through the Signature Theater in the Schools program.

Rebecca Gebhardt - Connecting with Kids as Residence Services Coordinator at Fort Henry Gardens, an Arlington Housing Corporation property.

Bart Gray - Connecting with Kids as a volunteer coach and organizer of the NFL Flag Football League in Arlington under Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources.

Mary Ann Jackson – Connecting with Kids as the Extended Day Program supervisor at Long Branch Elementary School

Marji Jepperson, Connecting with Kids as a long-time volunteer with Encore Stage and Studio.

Dan Lemmon, Clarendon Methodist Youth Group Leader and **Sarah Doud and Laura Doud** – Youth Group Leaders at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Connecting with Kids through creating and running “Joe’s Place” – a fun monthly event for middle school teens.

Stella Martinez – Connecting with Kids as a caring and supportive School Information Specialist – APS School and Community Relations Office.

Bobby Meeks – Connecting with Kids as an encouraging and fun Arlington Forest Pool and Arlington Public Schools Dive Coach.

Joy Rambert, Connecting with Kids through directing Resident Services at Harvey Hall, an Arlington Housing Corporation property.

Gregg Robertson, - Connecting with Kids everyday as an educator and principal at Washington-Lee High School.

Sara Fiorini Rouse - Connecting with Kids as a Washington-Lee HS Health and PE teacher and coach

Martha Smith – Connecting with Kids through her many years as a piano and music teacher here in Arlington.

Heather Spence - Connecting with Kids as a volunteer soccer coach, coaching the same team from 2nd grade on to high school.

Rebecca Tax - Connecting with Kids through hiring teens as a business woman and owner of Lazy Sundae.

David Welsh - Connecting with Kids as a teacher, Arlington Career Center, Arlington Public Schools and producer of Slices of Life I and II, two feature length movies written by and all about Arlington teens.