

The Partnership for HOPE SF
Reflections on Accomplishments, Impact and Lessons Learned Since 2010

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Introduction

“I knew something was going to change. [It was 2007, and] Mayor Gavin Newsom sat in my living room after playing basketball with my son. No one had ever bothered to come to Hunters View before, and then one day, the mayor was on my couch!” Rosemarie Sims has lived in Hunters View her whole life. She now works in the community as a Senior Resident Service Connector and Team Leader, managing other staff and ensuring that residents are supported—their health is maintained, their rent is paid on time and they know how to access City resources. Before HOPE SF, Rosemarie and her neighbors lived in an isolated dilapidated public housing project with no nearby grocery stores, no convenient buses, not even a neighborhood fire station. They lived cut off from the City’s prosperity and opportunity until HOPE SF changed her life and transformed her neighborhood.

HOPE SF is the nation’s first large-scale public housing transformation effort aimed at de-concentrating poverty, reducing social isolation, and creating vibrant mixed-income communities without mass displacement. Managed as a collective impact initiative and run out of the Mayor’s Office, HOPE SF serves over 5,000 individuals residing in four of the most historically isolated and dilapidated public housing communities in the nation. In 2014, Mayor Lee established the initiative as the City’s central anti-poverty and equity initiative.

This report tells the story of the HOPE SF Initiative. Our focus is on the role of the Partnership for HOPE SF (“The Partnership”), a “table” comprised of public and philanthropic partners, under the larger umbrella of the overall initiative, established to integrate philanthropy into a bold initiative run by a local municipality. The Partnership is led by The San Francisco Foundation, Enterprise Community Partners, and the City and County of San Francisco. This Executive Summary provides key highlights of how the Partnership has helped complement, catalyze, accelerate, and institutionalize the work across the HOPE SF initiative – by seeding new programs, measuring results, using influence and expertise, and raising up lessons learned. Our complete five year report can be found at: <http://sff.org/donors/more-information/invest-in-the-partnership-for-hope-sf/>.

II. Impact of the Partnership for HOPE SF

The Partnership plays a number of roles in HOPE SF – all of which have different impacts on the initiative and the lives of HOPE SF residents over the past five years.

- *The Partnership As Leader* –One of the key roles of the Partnership has been to hold the arc of the initiative—to ensure that the initiative has durability beyond Mayoral terms and to influence necessary internal changes so that the initiative continues to have priority status for the City. Thanks in large measure to the Partnership, in 2014 Mayor Lee hired a HOPE SF Director, staffed up the initiative, invested additional general fund dollars towards the human services, and created a long term financing plan that ensures all four sites will be developed.
- *The Partnership as Funder and Convener*—The Partnership has leveraged \$15,000,000 in donations, but we are much more than a funder – we have convened key partners and brought

to the table expertise from other communities and access to best practices nationwide. The Partnership provides technical assistance, such as organizational capacity building, professional development for staff at all levels, strategic planning and design, and support around data analysis, to support the work. **It is one of the driving forces leading HOPE SF—bringing together public, private, and non-profit sector leaders and using the power of collective impact to ensure the work continues to be a city priority.**

- *The Partnership as Expert*—A key role of the Partnership has been to serve as an expert and a strategic partner in two ways: structural and programmatic. Our early experience with the initiative showed that ambitious programmatic goals without systems change yielded limited results. We learned that success requires figuring out where to start programmatic AND how to build the infrastructure to support and sustain those programs. Once we grasped this insight, the Partnership developed a roadmap to support both system- and program-level work with a set of holistic and tailored strategies to address the inter-related challenges faced by the people living in HOPE SF communities.

HOPE SF'S INTER-LOCKING STRATEGIES

- Equitable mixed-income development: ensure low-income communities participate in and benefit from the mixed-income redevelopment.
- Trauma-informed community building: Increase social cohesion, personal transformation, and “readiness” towards service utilization.
- Neighborhood-based health and wellness supports: Embed nurses and community health workers in onsite Wellness Centers, thereby increasing healthy behavior, connecting residents to medical homes, and decreasing stress and chronic disease.
- Economic mobility pathways tied to education supports: Create durable, protected pathways with enhanced wraparound support for disconnected young adults. Build connections between schools and communities to achieve better outcomes in kindergarten readiness, school attendance, and academic achievement.

- *The Partnership as Support for Data and Evaluation* – A key role of the Partnership has been to bring a research and evaluation lens to the work of HOPE SF. From its inception, the Partnership worked to ensure that there is an ongoing process of reflection on what works, what is not working, and how to make mid-course corrections. The initiative is designed to be data-driven and to include a robust, collectively-defined research and evaluation agenda. Key accomplishments in this area include a 2012 Baseline Evaluation which enabled us to track and measure the impact of place-based investments on social and economic outcomes for low-income residents. We have also improved the capacity of partners at all levels to shift towards a culture of continuous improvement, using a Results Based Accountability Framework which focuses on population level outcomes and community level performance measures.

III. Highlights of Accomplishments

Thanks to the strategic partnership between philanthropy, the public sector and the community, the HOPE SF initiative has grown more robust, more focused and more impactful. The Partnership has helped develop a strategic framework, brought data and evidence to bear, lifted up best practices,

convened the needed players and sectors, and helped seed the beginning of a public sector system re-design. The growth and strengthening of the initiative is also matched by a steady growth and progress in improving the lives of the HOPE SF residents. Below we provide a few key highlights. Much more can be found in our full report.

New Construction and Resident Retention

By February 2017 San Francisco will have constructed 114 new units at Hunters View and 184 at Alice Griffiths. At Hunters View, 60% (compared to 8% in Atlanta and Chicago) of residents stayed onsite and moved into newly constructed homes, now part of a mixed-income community. 100% of the Alice Griffith residents will remain in their community since no relocation was required to construct new homes. Construction will begin at Potrero and Sunnyside in 2017, a milestone year where new homes will be in progress across all four properties.

Resident Leadership: Uzuri's Story

The Partnership has supported initiative-level engagement, site-based leadership, and direct employment of resident leaders. Residents are hired as onsite resources for information to help residents navigate services, advocate for community needs, and organize community activities across all domains – including health, education, and economic mobility. Uzuri's story is just one of many examples:

Uzuri used to cope with life's challenges by abusing drugs. Today things have changed. She is a recent college graduate and is inspired to rebuild her life as well as her community. Uzuri credits the HOPE SF Leadership Academy and her job as a community builder with helping her stay clean and sober. She started the walking school bus and now leads the community's walking club. This work gave her a new sense of self-worth and inspired her to go back to school and embrace the charge to lead by example for HOPE SF residents. Her work as a community builder combats chronic disease and social isolation. "We call it healthy living," says Uzuri. "When there is trauma because of violence, like gun shots, adults may not openly react out of fear. The children are more open, sometimes acting out in school, which leads to being reprimanded, which continues the cycle. By having programs like Zumba, New Beginnings, Walking Club and meditation, we provide an hour of safe space where residents are peaceful, interacting in a positive way and getting to know each other. Consistency is key," she says. "We take people where they are in their lives and welcome them."

Peer Health Leadership Program and Wellness Supports

Health assessments conducted in the HOPE SF neighborhoods in 2012-2013 shined a light on the need for culturally relevant and trusted health services. It spotlighted that residents used the emergency room instead of accessing regular medical services. Residents indicated that they did not have adequate access to health and wellness services and did not perceive available services as culturally relevant. HOPE SF partners responded by devising a strategic path forward for a community health initiative through a pilot health and wellness center opened in a vacant housing unit in January 2015. In the first six months, the wellness clinic received 290 nursing visits, 109 mental health visits and 153 participants at its post-crisis sessions. The center also integrated the Peer Health Leadership Program (PHLP), which employed residents as community health workers to promote healthier living, provide support, information and health advocacy, and to serve the critical role of connecting residents to health services. In 2016, 22 Peer Health Leaders organized and led activities, such as Zumba, walking clubs, nutrition classes and more, reaching 1,475 residents, twice as many as the first year of the pilot. The Wellness Clinic and the PHLP have now transitioned from pilot to a permanent strategy that is fully

integrated into the City’s health system. **The course of this strategy has become a prototype of how we leverage private resources to innovate and pilot, demonstrate what works, and then institutionalize it within the City’s publicly funded system to ensure long term sustainability**

Reducing Chronic Absenteeism among Elementary School Students

There are over 1,200 students from HOPE SF communities enrolled in San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) schools. The need to improve kindergarten readiness, school attendance, academic attainment and high school graduation rates are key priorities for the initiative. In 2012, the HOPE SF baseline report found that that 53% of students living in HOPE SF were chronically absent from school. Recognizing that chronic absence is a powerful proxy for families in crisis, we saw HOPE SF’s “all-in” approach as an opportunity to strengthen the partnership between schools, students and their families.

School-based supports: We identified eight elementary schools known as the “HOPE SF schools” that serve large numbers of children from the four housing sites and provided them with funding for additional student support activities. The HOPE SF school staff and the community-based education liaisons work in teams to analyze data, engage parents, message the importance of attendance and address the needs of chronically absent students.

Community-based supports: We invested in embedding Education Liaisons—professionals, who are based in the community, not the schools. Their role is to link families with the schools. Education liaisons know the families and the environment they live in. They understand the challenges, help bridge relationships and advocate for students. The Partnership engages residents in developing solutions and funds programs such as the Walking School Bus.

Results have been striking: **Whereas 53% of students across all four HOPE SF communities were chronically absent in 2011, 27% were chronically absent at the end of the school year in 2016.**



Residents make their way through the housing complex each morning, knocking on doors, gathering children, ensuring safe passage and positive adult connection along the way to school.

On August 15—the first day of school this year, there was a shooting as children were getting ready for school. Because of the walking school bus, children arrived at school safely, and the school staff was informed immediately. Parents later expressed a level of trust that did not previously exist in the community, “We weren’t worried. They were with you.”

A New Approach to Economic Mobility: Phoenix Partnership

Central to HOPE SF's mission is working in partnership with the residents to develop pathways for economic opportunity and mobility. Early on, we believed that HOPE SF's employment goals could be accomplished by securing existing job training slots for HOPE SF residents. However, results of this approach were mixed. Pilot programs retained or advanced about half of the HOPE SF participants who enrolled. The services and supports available, as effective as they were elsewhere in the City, were not well-matched to the needs of people in the HOPE SF neighborhoods. This was particularly the case for youth who had complex barriers and had experienced profound trauma. After a process of reflection, research and testing of alternatives, we have developed a strategy that supports durable, relentless, trauma-informed outreach and coaching designed to shelter young people over a longer time horizon than in a traditional program (up to 7 years) and grow their network of support, so that they achieve their education and job-related goals.

IV. Lessons Learned and Next Steps

Much has been accomplished in the years since HOPE SF first launched. We began the process of physical transformation, created an infrastructure to guide and track the work of the initiative, and received early indications that we are making progress towards our goals. Yet, we still have much work to do. Moving forward, we will build upon some key lessons learned.

- **Learning 1: Place matters.** Mixed-income affordable housing is a critical lever for dramatically improving social outcomes for communities of concentrated poverty. HOPE SF has demonstrated that quality affordable housing within a thriving urban community serves as a platform for improving educational outcomes, health and longer-term economic mobility for lower-income children, youth and adults. The next step in the journey is to identify strategies that ensure that families of all income levels feel a part of an integrated and equitable community.
- **Learning 2: Achieving social cohesion and economic inclusion require continuously building community trust.** Trauma-responsive, durable, individualized interventions are required to address deep systemic barriers and geographic isolation felt by families. Through the work of HOPE SF, we have developed a deeper understanding of the reality of trauma and have begun to adopt practices to address it. In the coming year, we will focus our efforts on refining and evaluating a trauma-informed methodology at the systems, community and family levels and identify metrics that tie our trauma informed approach to our desired outcomes.
- **Learning 3: Developing resident leaders is key to achieving community transformation.** Resident-centered community transformation goes far beyond community events and input sessions. HOPE SF has demonstrated that resident engagement is a critical precondition for community transformation. Moving forward, we will continue to ensure that residents are part of the programmatic focus and also fully reflected in the structure of HOPE SF. HOPE SF's resident committee (different from a tenant association) will meet on an ongoing basis to "ground-truth" initiative level strategies. Residents will participate in data planning, training and evaluation.

- **Learning 4: A robust data analysis infrastructure is essential to support continuous quality improvement.** Before the HOPE SF Baseline Report was completed, no one really understood the truth about the challenges facing these neighborhoods and their residents. Today, we are armed with the information we need to effectively meet these challenges head on. In 2016, we re-engaged our evaluation partners to conduct a mid-course assessment and re-design the research and evaluation plan, with a particular focus on how the initiative can better align data collection and analysis across systems to measure short and long-term impacts.
- **Learning 5: Strong cross-sector leadership, collaboration and data-driven decision making are required to address complex structural and systemic challenges related to poverty.** The Partnership has focused on holding the core principle of public sector system-change, integration and alignment. Through HOPE SF, leaders see HOPE SF as the city’s foremost equity initiative in San Francisco, where stakeholders across sectors and agencies have the opportunity to work in alignment, “HOPE SF is an island of alignment in a sea of fragmentation,” says Ken Epstein of the Department of Public Health. Moving forward, the Partnership will continue to lead on coordination and public systems integration. We are in the process of stepping into another realm with the Phoenix Project, piloting a new way of working with trusted community-based organizations to develop the tools and infrastructure they need to succeed. At the same time, the City’s HOPE SF team has taken the lead on strengthening the adoption of an equitable collective impact framework to instill an initiative-wide culture of data-driven decision making, transparency, and shared accountability towards our defined result.

V. Conclusion

Seven years ago the four HOPE SF sites represented the most isolated, dilapidated communities in San Francisco. Today, thanks to the work of all the partners associated with HOPE SF and the strategic leadership of the Partnership as an advocate, convener, funder and thought-partner, these neighborhoods are on a course for complete transformation. Residents have been engaged, trained and employed to become community leaders and mentors. Children are attending school at higher rates and community health is improving. CBOs have been re-energized and are receiving the support and training they need to be successful. National and local leaders are engaged and providing expertise, influence and funding. Systems for collecting, analyzing and tracking data are in place. The initiative is fully staffed and has risen to become a top City priority.

We are excited about what is to come and welcome your continued partnership as we strive to improve the community we serve.