<u>**Appalachian Teaching Project Final Report**</u>

Public Policy Options for Building a Sustainable Future in Appalachia
Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative for Community Centers

Emory & Henry College
Dr. Rosalind Reichard
President
Post Office Box 947
Emory, Virginia 24327
276.944.6107

February 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

April 29, 2010

Dr. Talmage A. Stanley
Assistant Professor of Public Policy and Community Service
Emory & Henry College
PO Box 1
Emory, Virginia 24327
276.944.6900
tastanle@ehc.edu

<u>**Final Report Narrative**</u>

Name of Project: **Public Policy Options for Building a Sustainable Future in Appalachia Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative for Community Centers**

Grant Period: February 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Grantee Name: **Emory & Henry College**   Project Director: **Talmage A. Stanley**

Description of Project:

In the fall semester, 2009, the Department of Public Policy and Community Service (PPCS) offered the Senior Practicum (PPCS 400) in which five students undertook collaborative research projects in partnership with the staff of agencies and organizations in Washington and Smyth counties in Virginia. In addition to the persons working in these agencies, students worked directly with clients. This multi-tiered collaborative process resulted in identification of specific policy questions connected to real needs and issues in the community, with students researching those questions. The Director of the Appalachian Center, who is also chair of the Department of Public Policy and Community Service and the instructor for the course, assigned students based on a series of regional focus groups held in March 2008, ongoing partnership work and meetings with members of the community, and recent conversations with agency heads. The assignments matched the needs of communities and agencies with the skills and strengths of the student researcher. All parties to the partnership signed a contract detailing work to be performed, tangible outcomes and goals, and deliverables to the community.

In collaboration with community partners, students focused their research and proposal on developing a region-wide, ARC-funded pilot project that would utilize abandoned school buildings in rural communities as potential sites for federal qualified health centers, afterschool programs, social services delivery venues, and other programs to address community needs.

Activities:
1. Student researchers and citizen partners worked together to focus research on identified systemic needs
2. Student researchers and citizen partners together identified ways to build strong working relationships
3. Students conducted background analysis of community identified needs and issues, discerning their systemic root causes, and the policy issues involved
4. Students conducted research and explored options for policies that could produce long-term, sustainable solutions to the community identified needs and issues
5. Based on this research, students developed a policy brief responding to the identified community needs
6. Students presented these briefs to the community partners and all persons involved in shaping and defining the research

7. Students worked with citizen partners to identify strategies for realizing the changes called for in order to address the systemic issues and needs
8. Using these briefs, students collaborated with citizen partners to advocate for the policy changes and solutions identified as possible responses to systemic issues
9. Students presented the full report, ***Public Policy Options for Building a Sustainable Future in Appalachia Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative for Community Centers*** to the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C. on December 4, 2009, and at the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association, Dahlonega, Georgia, March 19, 2010.

Project Outcomes:
1. Identified a range of policy issues and questions related to systemic issues in Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia
2. Developed policy brief
3. Publication of the policy brief to community partners throughout Southwest Virginia, via *Working Together* newsletter
4. Development of a bound document highlighting a pilot project to meet several systemic needs in the region, utilizing existing resources in buildings once used as schools, but now vacant.
5. Presented research and proposal at the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 2009.
6. Created a poster for presentation at the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C.
7. Presented proposal and findings to the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Conference, March, 19, 2010.
8. Reported to each of the agencies and organizations in which the students are working.

Problems Encountered:
1. Indifference of major policy-making agencies
2. The persistent belief in the region's places, among the region's people, that problems are intractable and insolvable
3. The acceptance as normal of grievous systemic injustices, inequities, and inequalities
4. Failure of one or two community partners to fulfill expectations
5. Difficulty of developing and advocating a major policy idea and proposal from outside the "inner circles" of public policy making

Program Continuation and Sustainability:
The proposal and pilot project called for here is entirely feasible, offering a range of opportunities for communities and citizens, particularly given the funding for community health centers to be made available through the new health reform law. There is also the possibility here of future engagements of Emory & Henry students with these places, working together to address these systemic issues. To do so requires a shared and long-term commitment on the part of the places and the College to work to build sustainable communities.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The develop of five community centers across the Appalachian region, located in vacant school buildings, closed as a part of school consolidation measures due to population decline and economic exigencies. The allocation of $1.9 million in ARC monies to plan, develop, and implement the five centers that would become a pilot project for other communities in the region. These centers could be venues of rhe delivery of several social and community services as well as federally qualified health centers (FQHC).

Attachments:

Full report is attached.

Public Policy Options for Building a Sustainable Future in Appalachia:

Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative for Community Centers

Becky Jones   Amanda King

Rachel Preston   Joni Ritter

Zachary Triplett   Dr. Talmage Stanley, Instructor

<u>Table of Contents</u>

Utilizing Schools, Community Organizations, and Community Members to Create Community Centers in Southwest Virginia.

Goal:
Based on the problems that have been discovered through community discussions, our goal is to create a community center which addresses pertinent needs of the regional community by relying on existing assets.

Scope of the Problem:
During the spring of 2008, the Appalachian Center for Community Service at Emory & Henry College along with the Virginia Cooperative Extension Agency hosted regional conversations with community members from the Southwest Virginia region. The following are some overarching needs that community members mentioned in these conversations:

- After school enrichment programs and education curriculums focused on Appalachian culture and heritage
- Affordable and accessible childcare
- Public transportation
- Collaboration and utilization of organizations in the community including Social Services
- Job preparedness and training
- Community centers for recreational and educational purposes
- Intergenerational care and activities

By working in community agencies during the fall semester of 2009, we have each observed specific issues that could be addressed by the creation of community centers. In addition, we have researched various components related to making communities stronger by using community assets. Below is a list of problems and hindrances that we believe would be addressed by the creation of community centers in Southwest Virginia.

- In July of 2009, the unemployment rate for Washington County, Virginia, was 9.1% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This places Washington County in the bottom half of employment rates in the state.
- This rate reflects both a problem with jobs and a potential problem with the types of jobs and types of job training available to residents.
- There are deeper issues that need to be addressed concerning local citizens, including: their feelings of worth, their values within a community, and their utilization of personal skills and strengths. Individuals may not feel empowered to offer their knowledge because their own social capital has not been realized.
- Effective staffing would need to be secured using the residents of the community, but many school regulations that prevent certain people from being able to fulfill these positions.
- The area has distinct groups of people that can be targeted to help staff the community center and these groups are not being utilized to their full potential.
- School buildings, facilities, and buses are only being used to serve the students who are enrolled in those schools. Outside groups must pay rental fees in order to use the school facilities. [1] This practice gives the sense that these facilities are forbidden to members of the community who are not directly served by the public school system. [2]
- We do not see the need to build more facilities when existing school buildings could be utilized to house the proposed community centers. [3]

---

[1] "Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizen's Guide for Planning and Design." U.S. Department of Education. 6 of 59. <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/archives/inits/construction/commguide.pdf>. Accessed October 30, 2009

[2] "Schools." 6 of 59.

[3] "Schools." 7 of 59.

- Many communities do not have the available space to hold any afterschool programs as well as day care services.
- Day care services are very important to working parents. Quality and affordable daycare is not readily available for residents of Southwest Virginia

Policy Milestones:

Related to Staffing:
"United We Serve" is a nationwide service initiative that will help meet growing social needs resulting from the economic downturn. With the knowledge that ordinary people can achieve extraordinary things when given the proper tools, President Obama is asking us to come together to help lay a new foundation for growth. This initiative aims to both expand the impact of existing organizations by engaging new volunteers in their work and encourage volunteers to develop their own "do-it-yourself" projects. United We Serve is a sustained, collaborative and focused effort to promote service as a way of life for all Americans.[4]

Related to Afterschool and Daycare Programming:
There are many different ways that afterschool programs are funded by the government. These include: entitlement programs, block grants, project grants, demonstration grants, and loans. Some major federal funding comes from The Child Care and Development Fund, TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the Federal Food and Nutrition Program. A majority of money goes to programs needing buildings and space. However, by offering the public schools as a place for these services, that particular money will not be needed therefore allowing more money to go towards other initiatives such as the activities that children will be learning during these enrichment programs. There are also many different grants and funding opportunities from the government that go toward day care services such as the Child and Adult Food Services, Child Care Partnership Project, and Early Childhood Development Program.

Related to Job Creation and Training:
We realized throughout our research that issues relating to jobs are a major problem in Southwest Virginia and the following programs are aimed towards job creation and job training.
- **VIEW (Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare) Program**: VIEW assists TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families) recipients in their goal of becoming self-sufficient through a wide variety of services. One aspect of this program is an assessment which determines needs and skills as well as develops goals. Job readiness is another part of this program and is a one week class that encourages job placement and retention through budgeting practices and life lessons. The program also includes job development which refers recipients to a job case manager with an independent corporation. This individualized assistance allows recipients assistance with job leads, resumes, job searching, and transportation.
- **National Career Development Association**: The National Career Development Association (NCDA) is a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). The mission of NCDA is to promote the career development of all people over the life span. To achieve this mission, NCDA provides service to the public and professionals involved with or interested in career development, including professional development activities, publications, research, public information, professional standards, advocacy, and recognition for achievement and service.[5]
- **The Appalachian Regional Commission's Area Development Program and Highway Program** address the four goals identified in the Commission's strategic plan: increase job opportunities and per capita income in Appalachia to reach parity with the nation, strengthen the capacity of the people of Appalachia to compete in the global economy, develop and improve Appalachia's infrastructure to make

---

[4] United We Serve informational website. http://www.serve.gov/about.asp
[5] NCDA Website. http://www.ncda.org/pdf/Policy.pdf

the Region economically competitive, and build the Appalachian Development Highway System to reduce Appalachia's isolation.[6]

Related to Infrastructure:

In October of 1998, The U.S. Department of Education put together a forum involving discussion by educators and architects as well as other planning personnel about using existing schools and future school buildings as centers of community. One result of this forum is a very enlightening publication called *Schools as Centers of Community: A Citizens' Guide for Planning and Design*. This guide discusses current uses for school property and also gives design solutions and examples of schools that have become centers of community. It also provides readers with a sense of how to implement a community center design into current practices. The Center for Applied Technology and Career Exploration in Rocky Mount, Virginia is a good example of a school building being used to do more than what goes on during a normal school day. It is designed so that each type of career has its own module and the center of the building is where students learn problem solving skills that are applied to real world situations.

---

[6] Appalachian Regional Commission Website, http://www.arc.gov

Policy Option

Many schools serve as the center focus for their communities. The PPCS 400 class is proposing to use the asset of public schools to serve as community centers in order to strengthen the communities which they serve. These community centers will have programs which are designed from the results gathered in community conversations that have taken place over the past two years. We would like to emphasize the use of a community's assets to solve problems and issues within an area. Our policy would involve:

A. Use of public school property for community centers:
   a. School buildings
      i. Classrooms will be used for afterschool programs, day care, and job preparedness courses.
      ii. Kitchens will be used as food pantries to meet the immediate needs of communities. They could also be rented by community members for small culinary businesses during the summer break.
      iii. Gyms will be used for after school recreational activities and community fairs or activities.
      iv. Auditoriums will be used for local community theater productions and community discussions or forums.
   b. School buses
      i. Used for transportation to and from day care and the afterschool programs.
      ii. During the day, buses can be used to transport people to possible job openings and internships. They could also be used to take community members to doctors' appointments and grocery stores.
      iii. In general, buses could be used as affordable public transportation systems during the middle of the day and at night.

B. Afterschool/Day Care Programs
   a. After school
      i. Offer out of classroom experiences where students have the opportunity to learn about the surrounding community.
      ii. Intergenerational co-learning opportunities in which older generations and younger generations exchange knowledge and skills.
      iii. Emphasize Appalachian culture and history education.
      iv. Have mentor/tutor relationships which help hold students accountable in co-learning environments.
   b. Day Care
      i. Provide free or sliding scale day care for local families.
      ii. Make day care accessible to those most in need of this service.

C. Job Preparedness and Advocacy
   a. Within this community center, we believe it is important to direct people into careers that will both benefit the community and make use of community members' skills, abilities, talents, and passions. We hope to do this by providing classes, opportunities, and experiences which build upon the ideas of social capital. Social capital emphasizes the fact that people have worth outside of their economic contributions and status. These classes would include, but not be limited to, job acquisition, budgeting, specific career training, GED, and family building.

b. Along with these classes, we propose having volunteer internships or job shadowing experiences which allow community members to have a chance to see and possibly work within a certain career before taking steps to obtain that employment.

c. The community center would also be used as a communication network for local businesses and organizations to post jobs and seek qualified and trained employees. Members who participate in programs would be able to know of job postings and would receive services to help them obtain those jobs such as help with resume and interview preparation.

d. The community center we are proposing would also serve as a sound board for local politicians and those who have an input on jobs coming into the area. We could advocate for jobs that allow people in the area to use the skills and passions they have to obtain careers that they desire.

D. Meeting the Immediate Needs of the Community
    a. Food
        i. Refer community members to local food banks
        ii. Help with local food drives which will provide food to the food banks
        iii. Refer community members to governmental programs which provide nutritional assistance for children and families
    b. Housing
        i. Refer community members to local shelters and organizations which offer temporary housing
        ii. Provide information about local available housing units
        iii. Advocate for affordable housing in the area
    c. Healthcare
        i. Refer community members to local health centers and organizations which provide healthcare at low costs
        ii. Create partnerships with local doctor's offices, dental clinics, hospitals, and mental health centers.

E. Staffing: all staffing would come from within the community because we believe that every person has the skills, abilities, and passions to contribute to their community in a positive way.
    a. Executive Director
        i. A portion of money used to fund the community center would be used as a salary for this position to oversee the operations of the center.
    b. AmeriCorps
        i. A VISTA volunteer would be used to coordinate programs with community leaders.
    c. Bus Drivers
        i. Community centers are going to provide transportation using school buses, so there will be a need for a group of qualified bus drivers.
    d. Community Partnerships
        i. Programs coordinated by local organizations could be offered at the community centers.
        ii. Local business could also be utilized to provide job and internship opportunities.
    e. Volunteers from the community
        i. Older students would be tutors and mentors for younger students at afterschool programs
        ii. Elderly volunteers could contribute by teaching students about the culture and heritage of Appalachia as well as demonstrating trades.

7. Students worked with citizen partners to identify strategies for realizing the changes called for in order to address the systemic issues and needs
8. Using these briefs, students collaborated with citizen partners to advocate for the policy changes and solutions identified as possible responses to systemic issues
9. Students presented the full report, ***Public Policy Options for Building a Sustainable Future in Appalachia Appalachian Regional Commission Initiative for Community Centers*** to the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C. on December 4, 2009, and at the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Association, Dahlonega, Georgia, March 19, 2010.

Project Outcomes:
1. Identified a range of policy issues and questions related to systemic issues in Southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia
2. Developed policy brief
3. Publication of the policy brief to community partners throughout Southwest Virginia, via *Working Together* newsletter
4. Development of a bound document highlighting a pilot project to meet several systemic needs in the region, utilizing existing resources in buildings once used as schools, but now vacant.
5. Presented research and proposal at the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C., on December 4, 2009.
6. Created a poster for presentation at the ATP meeting in Washington, D.C.
7. Presented proposal and findings to the annual meeting of the Appalachian Studies Conference, March, 19, 2010.
8. Reported to each of the agencies and organizations in which the students are working.

Problems Encountered:
1. Indifference of major policy-making agencies
2. The persistent belief in the region's places, among the region's people, that problems are intractable and insolvable
3. The acceptance as normal of grievous systemic injustices, inequities, and inequalities
4. Failure of one or two community partners to fulfill expectations
5. Difficulty of developing and advocating a major policy idea and proposal from outside the "inner circles" of public policy making

Program Continuation and Sustainability:
The proposal and pilot project called for here is entirely feasible, offering a range of opportunities for communities and citizens, particularly given the funding for community health centers to be made available through the new health reform law. There is also the possibility here of future engagements of Emory & Henry students with these places, working together to address these systemic issues. To do so requires a shared and long-term commitment on the part of the places and the College to work to build sustainable communities.

Budget

I. Job Development

Classes:
(Job acquisition, budgeting, specific career training, GED, Green Jobs, etc.)

Stipends for class teachers/organizations (25 classes @$25)	$625
Specialized classes (GED, Green Jobs, etc.)	$1,000
Supplies	$400

Job Shadowing/Internships:

Transportation Costs	$500

Job Advocacy:

Marketing/Printing costs	$500

Communication Network:

Website Management	$300
Supplies	$250

Part I Total: **$3,575**

II. Immediate Needs

Food costs:	$16,000
Shelter:	$16,000
Emergency Medications:	$8,400
Emergency Travel (doctor's appointments):	$6000
Home repairs:	$500
Baby needs:	$400

Part II Total: **$ 40,406**

III. Staffing

Executive director:	$32,000
AmeriCorps volunteer:	$6,000
Volunteer coordinator	
Program coordinators: (3@ $20,000)	$60,000
Job preparedness	
Immediate needs	
Daycare and afterschool programs	

Part III Total: **$98,000**

IV. Facilities

Summer: (the end of May to the middle of August: approximately 80 days)

Hourly rates for the use of school facilities:

Gymnasium	$25	
Cafeteria	$15	
Kitchen	$20	
6 Classrooms	$24	
Total cost	$84/hr @12 hrs/day X 80 days	$80,640

Custodian
Wages ($12/hr @12hrs/day X 80 days) $11,520

When Schools are in session: (approximately 230 days)

Hourly rates for school facilities:

Gymnasium	$12	
Cafeteria	$ 8	
Kitchen	$10	
6 Classrooms	$12	
Total cost	$42/hr@ 12hrs/day X 230 days	$115,920

Custodian
Wages ($12/hr @12hrs/day X 80 days) $11,520

Part IV Total   **$241,200**

V. Day Care/Afterschool Program

Afterschool: August-May (approximately 37 weeks, excluding summer and holidays)
Snack ($45/wk X 37wks) $ 1,665
Creative Activities/Field Trips $2,500

Daycare: Year round (excluding holidays)
Meals/Snacks ($225/wk X 49wks) $11,025
Activities/toys/games: $1,500

Part V. Total   **$16,690**

Total Cost (1 Program)   **$ 399,871**

Total Cost of Pilot Program (5 Programs)   **$1,999,355**