Responding to the needs of Our Children

Middle Education with Academic Interventions and a Holistic Support Network

In our multigenerational approach, it is important that our children receive an education that will greatly reduce, if not eliminate, the possibility they will continue the cycle of poverty. Academic achievement remains among our highest priorities. Responding to the needs of students is the key. In partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Renaissance West STEAM Academy (RWSA) is positioning itself to deliver that level of education. We must start with the basics. First we must build a culture of learning. And we must teach mastery of the building blocks to learning.

But to do that, we must address nonacademic barriers to learning. Many of our children come to school with the weight of the world on their shoulders. For them, academic achievement might seem like folly. Creating positive relationships between teachers, staff and students throughout the school year is one way RWSA improves students abilities to succeed. But it is still not enough for many.

Through the partnership with United Way of Central Carolinas and Communities in Schools (CIS), RWCI provides the funding for a CIS Intensive Case Manager to increase positive role models and help address students' daily struggles. Through support from The Duke Endowment, RWCI is able to provide Teacher Assistants for pre-K to 3rd grade classrooms. The Belk Foundation continues to invest in the RWSA Literacy Center. These are a few of many programs funded by our partners helping us build strong children.

RWCI and CMS are continuing the implementation of a proven education model developed by Purpose Built Schools. The model has shown tremendous results in providing a quality education for Title I schools. Increased funding is needed to fully implement all components of this model with fidelity.

Literacy Intervention Lab Early Indicators

- 96% of students increased their letter fluency by an average 24 letters
- Word count per minute by an average of 16 words
- Accuracy by an average of 11%

Math Intervention Lab Implementation

In 2019 RWCI opened the first Math Intervention Lab (below) at RWSA. The Math Lab will complement the Literacy Intervention Lab which opened in 2017. Thank you to the Skeebo Foundation, Belk Foundation Next Gen Board, and Collins Aerospace for making the Math Lab, a key component to our Education Model, possible. Continued funding will be needed in order to sustain operations into the 2020-2021 school year.

CMS Superintendent Earnest Winston visits with Principal Stacey Clark at RWSA.
High School and Adult Education

Maximizing Quality of Life and Economic Mobility

The High School Equivalency exam is a battery of four tests that must be passed in order to obtain the diploma. Tiffany (shown left) was the first resident to pass all four and earn her high school diploma at Renaissance West. Tiffany is an inspiration to her classmates and continues her educational pursuits for a better life. She is now pursuing a career in healthcare and looks forward to her future. One of RWCI’s Life Navigators focuses on job placement. She plays a key role in helping connect residents to job opportunities.

Thank you PwC for your support of RWCI’s High School Equivalency program.

Intergenerational Programming

RWCI has assisted teens living at Renaissance West with forming a Teen Advisory Board. This group of smart, young adults has contributed several creative ideas for improving their community, including Intergenerational Programming with Seniors. Showing leadership and creativity, the room is packed when the teens offer their time and talent to help others learn how to use technology. Thank you Southminster for donating iPads to the seniors and for providing a tremendous programming throughout the year.
Residents Are Self-Reporting Good Health

The Center for Budget and Policy states, “Combining affordable housing with intensive services for a high-needs group saved an average of over $6,000 a year per person in health care.” This fact reinforces our place-based strategy. Data shows that the zip code a person lives in has a greater impact on their health than their genetic make-up! At RWCI, measures are being taken to make healthcare accessible for all residents. One Charlotte Health Alliance provides weekly consultations and medical referrals that connect residents to physicians to address their specific healthcare needs. Other indicators of improved health in the neighborhood are increases in the percentage of adults with health insurance coverage and a primary care doctor.

2019 was the final year of implementation for RWCI’s first national grant award, the BUILD Health Challenge. Our grant project, called Building Uplifted Families, focused on upstream determinants of health. RWCI partnered with the One Charlotte Health Alliance to deploy Life Navigators at Renaissance for the first time.

One success of the Building Uplifted Families program is the story of a resident named “T.W.”. T.W. lacked a higher education and was stuck in a low-paying job. However, T.W. joined the Building Uplifted Families program and began to address underlying barriers to employment, pursued an education, and worked on improving her parenting skills and financial stability. T.W. is currently enrolled in the on-site GED program and has obtained employment. She has a resume for the first time and gained job readiness skills that she previously did not have. Her kids also participate in and benefit from Building Uplifted Families events. T.W. is more confident. She now has the knowledge and skills to express herself and advocate for her family. She has also gained the knowledge and courage to budget her finances while opening and maintaining a savings account that will help her and her family achieve a more stable and healthy lifestyle.

450+ people have benefitted from food or health and wellness programming.

1,200 transactions occurred at The Bulb mobile markets in 2019.

207 families served at the Food Lion FEEDS mobile market event.

294 individuals served through the Building Uplifted Family grant, focusing on upstream determinants of health. This grant had the following community impact:

50+ residents have received 300+ referrals for employment, healthcare, and financial support.

30% of unemployed participants have gained employment.

30% of uninsured participants have obtained health insurance.
Maximizing Health & Quality of Life

Heightened focus on bringing fresh food to a food desert

RWCI continues to support further investment in the West Boulevard corridor towards permanent access to healthy food options. Eliminating long bus rides to the grocery store is still a priority for our residents.

Through the support from the United Way of Central Carolinas (UWCC), Wells Fargo, and TIAA, RWCI is able to provide additional resources towards this critical need in west Charlotte. Each Tuesday, The Bulb, a nonprofit organization, sets up a farmers market in the neighborhood. Residents on the Food Security Committee volunteer to help distribute food and collect feedback from their neighbors. This weekly event also builds community. It has become a center for exchanging information about upcoming events, opportunities, trainings, and more!

Food Lion FEEDS is another great partner in the community! For the second year in a row, Food Lion FEEDS set up a mobile food market and distributed 4,865 pounds of food, in one afternoon!

RWCI is proud to partner with Basket Case Farms to bring fresh food to the neighborhood. Carter Bolin, Director of Education and Community for Basket Case, (pictured right,) visits RWCI each week with a bin of fruits and vegetables picked that day. Carter also donated his time to plant over 30 fruit, vegetable, and herb plants to grow in our Natural Learning Environment. Basket Case Farms has donated food valued at over $5,400 to the neighborhood.

Thank you to the Junior League of Charlotte for providing the Kids In The Kitchen program to children living at Renaissance West (pictured left) Starting to teach healthy habits at a young age is important. Kids learn recipes and receive extra ingredients to take home and teach their parents after each class.