

Challenging the Myths of Aging: An Encore Solution

A Report of The Dayton Foundation's
Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative
Pilot Program
2016-2019



The Dayton
Foundation
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Challenging the Myths of Aging: An Encore Solution

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Noreen Willhelm, Senior Fellow

For more than two years, recently retired professionals have been employed in a pilot program by The Dayton Foundation and assigned to area nonprofits as Del Mar Encore Fellows, to work on key community issues. In that time, the Fellows' 13,000+ hours of work have contributed nearly \$1 million¹ in value to the Dayton economy. This is a brief report on that experience and its impact, based on the work of five of the longest-tenured Fellows.

Background

Since 2010, the Del Mar Healthcare Fund has invested more than \$2.5 million in improving the lives of older adults in the Dayton region. Those investments have included responsive grant-making to area nonprofits and invitations to groups of organizations to develop collaborative approaches through the Del Mar Social Innovation Awards.

In 2015, Don Ambrose, the president of the Del Mar Healthcare Fund, offered The Dayton Foundation another opportunity to serve older adults, with a \$1 million grant. After a year-long listening tour in the community, Foundation Vice President Barbra Stonerock and other staff partnered with Encore.org to create a 3-year pilot program, the Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative. Encore.org is building a movement to tap the skills and experience of those in midlife and beyond, to improve communities and the world. The focus of the Del Mar Initiative is on how the Dayton Region can harness and effectively employ the vast resource represented by committed, active, engaged older adults.

The Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative

The Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative has three primary goals:

- To provide local nonprofits with the experience and wisdom of highly skilled older adults as paid Fellows
- To tap the skills of equally accomplished older adults as expert volunteers
- To change the conversation in our community around aging – older adults are an ever-expanding supply of practical knowledge, skills and perspective, not a net drain on resources

In 2017, The Dayton Foundation distributed a request for proposals to area nonprofits, looking for projects that would enlist recently retired professionals to address significant community problems. We placed Fellows with four Host Organizations, working on issues including adult literacy, educational equity and job-training challenges. Since then, we have engaged two rounds of new Host Organizations and today, we have seven Fellows working with area nonprofits:

- Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2, Katharine A. Stevens, Ph.D.
- Brunner Literacy Center, Sherrè Isaac Collier, M.S.
- Dayton Metro Library, Kaye Manson Jeter, Ph.D., J.D.

¹ As of August 31, 2019, the actual hours served are 13,138, valued at \$945,977. Encore.org places the value of a skilled Fellow's time at \$72 per hour.

- National Conference for Community and Justice, Linda Mercuri Fischbach, Ed.D.
- Ruth Frost Parker Center for Abundant Aging, Eric Johnson
- St. Mary Development Corp., Frieda R. Bennett, Ph.D.
- YWCA, Debra A. Brathwaite, Ph.D.

These projects – and Hosts – were selected because they addressed important issues in our community: racism, diversity and inclusion; exploring how technology can be used to improve low-income seniors' access to healthcare; ageism; expanding volunteer-led homework help programs in our libraries; and creating a stable, fairly-paid workforce to serve our oldest and youngest residents. They needed the expertise of highly skilled professionals and it's unlikely that the nonprofits could have afforded to hire such experience directly.

The Fellows also worked to change the conversation around aging. They have made presentations to community groups about the Encore movement and their individual initiatives; they spoke to community groups, classes and conferences – the Rotary Club, Sinclair Community College's SEEK program, the Philanthropy Ohio conference, the University of Dayton's Osher Life Long Learning Institute. They participated in community outreach and they made videos addressing ageism and experience.

Strengths

The Fellows together represent about 300 years of experience in our community – as citizens, workers, parents, neighbors, and volunteers. They offer a tremendously valuable wellspring of knowledge and understanding of issues and events that continue to shape our region.

One of the surprising strengths – and values – of the Del Mar Encore Fellows Initiative was engaging the Fellows as a group. Twice monthly and sometimes more frequently, the Fellows met to discuss progress on their individual projects, prepare for presentations and to share resources and experiences. The latter meant that the Host Organizations actually had a much deeper resource than their own Fellow; they had the experience of the whole group, which was often brought to bear on one project or another. The Fellows experienced these gatherings as support in this new role as Fellow – not quite employee, and not quite consultant – and took that sustenance, shared information, and resources with them as an asset to their work with the Hosts.

Their projects also afforded us the opportunity to engage expert older adults in meaningful volunteer work – creating research plans, running focus groups. We had the best success with meaningful, finite, manageable projects that gave volunteers a clear focus, a limited time commitment, and a sense of contributing to a greater good.

Challenges

But seeking skilled volunteers also provided us with the initiative's biggest challenge and revealed a weakness in our community's nonprofit infrastructure. Despite the wealth of willing and able volunteers of all ages in our region, there is no simple way for them to find

the charitable efforts that can best make use of their expertise and experience. If a volunteer has skills to offer, she or he has to investigate the needs of each nonprofit, one by one. It's discouraging, unproductive, and wastes a tremendous community resource – volunteer energy, regardless of the age of the prospective volunteer.

As you will see in this report, though, there is tremendous value in using the experience and wisdom of older adults to address our community's needs. We need to think about how we approach everything from volunteerism to employment, to ensure that we're getting the best that all of our citizens have to offer.

Recommendations to the Community

With the long experience of the Fellows, combined with our work on each individual initiative, we are recommending that the Dayton Region:

- Establish a permanent home with ongoing funding to support continued deployment of Encore Fellows to solve big challenges in the Dayton area.
- Create a centralized volunteer database, to enable volunteers and nonprofits to find each other, simply and efficiently.
- Assemble a task force of governments, nonprofits and older adults to explore how to expand opportunities for harnessing the skills and energy of the increasing number of older adults in our region.
- Encourage employers to review hiring practices and create flexible job structures that enable residents of all ages to continue contributing most productively to the region's workforce and economy.

THE PIONEER FELLOWS, HOST ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS

The following are reports from the five Fellows who've served the longest with Host Organizations, the "pioneers," in projects that have ranged from one to three years. In August, three new Fellows began their roles with three new Host Organizations.

Brunner Literacy Center, by Sherrè Isaac Collier

INTRODUCTION

Brunner Literacy Center was one of the first host organizations for a Del Mar Encore Fellow.

THE MISSION:

The Brunner Literacy Center provides flexible learning opportunities to meet the individual needs of adult students in pursuit of their personal or professional education.

BRUNNER LITERACY PROGRAMS:

- Illiterate adults come from all walks of life. The Brunner Literacy Center is open to any adult (19 years or older) who wishes to improve their skills through one-on-one tutoring in the following programs:
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE)
 - General Equivalency Diploma (GED)
 - Continuing Education (CE)
 - English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

THE DEL MAR ENCORE FELLOW

Sherrè Isaac Collier

Sherre has a BS in Broadcast Journalism, an MS in Human Resources Administration; and has completed numerous leadership and professional development programs during her career. She is a 1996 graduate of Leadership Dayton.

In 2017, I retired from my career in human resource management for the United States Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. Over my 33-year career, I worked in personnel administration, human capital management, organizational development, performance management, and employee development.

My career progressed through assignments as an intern, specialist, analyst, supervisor, manager and senior leader. I had the opportunity to work on special projects and innovative teams at Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command, Headquarters United States Air Force and at the Department of Defense. My experience has armed me with the ability to work with people and organizations at various levels and scope. I've had the opportunity to exercise communication, innovation, collaboration and project management skills throughout my career.



And, now, I am excited to be using and sharing those same skills in my encore career at The Dayton Foundation and Brunner Literacy Center. I am also grateful to be able to work in my community to help elevate adult literacy programs and to change the conversation on aging.

DEL MAR ENCORE INITIATIVE AT BRUNNER

The Del Mar Encore Fellow oversees research and advocacy initiatives, as well as recruits new volunteers. The goal is to raise the profile of adult illiteracy to attract additional tutors and funders.

Year One:

We explored a potential research project to gather data about the scope of adult illiteracy in the Dayton area. After consulting with several departments at the University of Dayton to try define the research project, all agreed the scope was too large and costly. I worked with graduate students at Wright State University to collect additional demographic information and draft a potential survey instrument. Although the research study was not implemented as originally planned, the effort gained

“Having a Del Mar Encore Fellow on your team gives you access to a seasoned, but also objective professional. It is easy as an Executive Director to begin to see the world solely within your organizational context. A Del Mar Encore Fellow broadens that context and provides you with other points of view and ways of engaging reality, both within and outside your organization.”

*Celine O’Neill, Executive Director (retired)
Brunner Literacy Center*

information that helped shape the message to funders and to advocate on behalf of those with literacy challenges. The information and tools remain a resource for the Center.

I created tutor recruitment and tutor development plans now used in presentations to community organizations and I established an email distribution list for soliciting volunteers. [See Appendix] I sent letters to over 60 community leaders, soliciting their members for potential volunteers.

An additional project was added to the list. I facilitated a capstone project for graduating seniors at the University of Dayton to identify and implement a student and tutor data management system. The Brunner Board of Directors approved the plan and the new data base was launched in April 2018.

Year Two:

I continued to work on volunteer recruitment and advocacy initiatives to support Brunner operations and programs. We hosted a community open house at Brunner as a strategic plan initiative to share the mission and programs at Brunner and recruit volunteer tutors.

As part of the Brunner strategic plan, I launched an initiative to document organizations offering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and programs in the Dayton area. I created and distributed a survey to assess the ESOL tutoring services and

classes, the communities served, and to identify ways to improve and expand ESOL services at Brunner Literacy Center. The report also serves as a community resource listing ESOL services in the Dayton Area and opportunities for collaboration amongst the organizations on behalf of the immigrant communities [see Appendix].

Year Three:

Brunner began offering services at the Montgomery County Day Reporting Center and, far exceeding our expectations, more than 120 S.T.O.P. (Secure Transitional Offender Program) and Probation clients have received their General Education Diploma (GED) through instruction by Brunner tutors. We are now partnering with the Montgomery County Common Pleas Courts, General Division, to review the impact of that work, launching the Adult Literacy Program and Drug & Alcohol Offenders Impact Study. My role is to organize and lead an effort to test the hypothesis that education reduces recidivism rates, which can reduce cost of incarceration, and reduce the number of people who repeatedly commit crime within the community. The study will also document outcomes such as jobs, continued education, etc.

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE GOALS

Volunteer tutors are the lifeline of the Brunner Literacy Center. Recruiting tutors will always be a strategic imperative and challenge. Tutoring requires certain skill sets and a long-term commitment (hopefully at least a year). Many of the volunteers have been with the center for three or more years. The work schedules are weekly and flexible, including on average one or two days a week and approximately 1.5-2 hours for each session. This extraordinary commitment of time is a challenge for tutor recruitment. We have found that the most effective approach is through personal contact, particularly with tutors and staff recruiting their personal contacts, and through presentations to small groups and organizations. We've experienced very limited results through social media and other electronic or mail campaigns.

Dayton Metro Library, by Kaye Manson Jeter

INTRODUCTION

Dayton Metro Library (DML) serves multiple communities across Montgomery County. The Main Library and Operations Center are based in downtown Dayton and there are 17 neighborhood branches in other areas of the county.

THE DEL MAR ENCORE FELLOW

Kaye Manson Jeter, Ph.D., J.D.

Dr. Kaye Manson Jeter has extensive K-12 public education experience; served as the general counsel in education for the state of Tennessee; Dean of Education at Central State University; and has published two education books.



DEL MAR ENCORE INITIATIVE AT DAYTON METRO LIBRARY

Since 2017, there has been an AmeriCorps federally-funded homework help program operating at Madden Hills and Northwest branches. DML proposed to The Dayton Foundation to use a Del Mar Encore Fellow to implement a more extensive homework help program, utilizing best practices to extend the services to other branches. The new services are to be developed to be a comprehensive, sustainable, volunteer-powered initiative.

Dr. Jeter has completed several community surveys, researched what other models exist for similar programs and developed steps and plans for future homework help sites in the DML service area.

Year One:

The first six months were spent learning about the organization and looking at the current “Rock Your Homework” program. I visited 16 branches and interviewed every branch manager. Simultaneously, I was invited to various functions in the county to begin to ask questions of the parents about their needs for a homework help program in their local library branch.

Since I have a background in education and not libraries, I began to research what other libraries were doing throughout the country. I was able to arrange a teleconference with a library that had a long-running volunteer-based homework help program.

BRANCH MANAGER SURVEY

I worked with each branch manager to gather their thoughts on incorporating a homework help program at their particular branch. In addition, each manager completed a written assessment, ranking researched components of successful programs, as well as stating how well they felt their branch was currently operating in each of the listed areas. The results were:

- A DML branch manager ranking of all homework help components
- A gap analysis showing the relationship of what research showed was important to what was currently being done at their branch
- A trend analysis of the open-ended comments made to the interviewer about homework help in general

“Working with Kaye has been a wonderful opportunity for the library. She brought a level of expertise and focus that enabled us to do much more than we could have accomplished if we only had monetary support. We really needed research done and quite frankly don't have the staffing bandwidth to pull off the project without the level of support only another person could bring to the table. I hope we can find a way to keep Kaye, she is such an asset.”

*Mandie Burns, Director Youth Services
Dayton Metro Library*

I prepared a summary of these findings, *Homework Help: Assessment by Dayton Metro Library Branch Managers Report*, for the library administration. [See Appendix]

PARENT SURVEY

From March 31 through April 6, 2019, information was gathered from parents using a written or computer survey administered by staff and volunteers at all of the branches. Over 50 volunteer slots were filled to help obtain survey responses. Prior to this survey, parent surveys were administered at community events. The information from those pilot surveys helped to simplify the final document for the county-wide event. There were 340 surveys collected, representing 44 zip codes. The objectives of the survey were to:

- Secure input about homework help needs from parents who were currently using the library
- Determine the needs of children in their homes
- Determine best times for having a homework program
- Making parents aware that we are trying to develop a program based on their needs
- Determine future parent engagement topics

A DML Parent Survey Results Report was prepared and given to the library administration to analyze and use for further program development.

My work as a Del Mar Encore Fellow came out of the 2016-2018 Dayton Metro Library Strategic Plan. The organization needed additional input from the community to help map out the strategic plan for the upcoming years. I was invited to attend the new strategic planning committee as a community representative to give input for the new strategic plan. The parent surveys were administered to ensure parent voices were heard. My efforts produced strong input from the top five areas : West Dayton, Trotwood, West Carrollton, Huber Heights, and Miamisburg. All of these areas needed to be heard.

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE GOALS

The recommended next step is to demonstrate that we listened to parents on the various issues, by using their recommendations in the future expansion of a sustainable homework help program. We also realize that volunteers needed specific training on how to effectively work with students.

The bottom line of implementation is finding and training volunteers of all ages to sustain the program. The library has a fulltime volunteer administrator, but this type of commitment will require many different approaches. The community needs a centralized way to recruit retired people as volunteers, demonstrating they are essential to making a difference for everyone.

I feel fortunate to have been chosen to do this work. In addition to using my research, program development, and educational background to develop a sustainable program, being a Del Mar Encore Fellow has allowed me to learn and share information with others in my community. I represent the older population. As a Fellow, I can also operate as a library ambassador for populations that underutilize the library. I want to continue to help bridge the gap between various populations with needs and the Dayton Metro Library.

Learn to Earn Dayton, by Vel Hux

INTRODUCTION

The Summer and Afterschool Collaborative (SASC)

July 2017 – June 2019

The key premise of why quality summer and afterschool programming is so vital is simple: Children spend more time out of school than in school every year. Typically, youth spend 180 days in school and 185 days out of school. Learning can't stop when school lets out.

Our primary goal was to operationalize and manage the Dayton Region's Summer and Afterschool Collaborative (SASC). It began as a loosely organized group of 10 summer and afterschool providers operating 16 sites, five engaged funders, mentoring organizations and other community stakeholders. Over 1100 children attended the programs directed by the 10 Collaborative pioneers.

This organic group came together in trust, willing to engage in shared leadership, and ready to collaborate in order to do a first in the greater Dayton region: Collect data and analyze five specific metrics. However, it quickly became apparent that the necessary assessment tools were not sitting in a box on a shelf. The necessary training was not locally available.

THE DEL MAR ENCORE FELLOW

Velvettee "Vel" B. Hux

Vel holds an MA in Communications Management and came to The Dayton Foundation by way of SCORE Dayton, where she served as vice president for marketing. She has a diverse background in nonprofits, education, corporate communications and running her own business.

Our goal was to "Create standards to ensure students benefit today and tomorrow," using common evaluations and an intentional approach to build high quality out-of-school-time programs.

The key metrics that the Summer and Afterschool Collaborative (SASC) identified were:

- Academic Behavior and Growth
- Family Engagement
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Student Attendance



Year One:

What an intriguing, sought-after adventure I anticipated as I became a Del Mar Encore Fellow in July 2017. It was an opportunity to really think out of the box and to explore new paths of achieving a greater good in the educational arena. It would be changing thoughts

and processes about our youth and how focusing on quality afterschool programs would be life-altering not only to the youth, but also, to staff, leadership, and parents.

During year one, many firsts occurred. The Learn to Earn leadership team was supportive, provided direction on bigger initiatives in the community, and understood the value of the Collaborative owning the work and seeing their decisions being realized. By the end of October 2017, three important tasks were occurring:

- Teacher and staff observation data was collected using a reliable and valid tool from the National Institute for Out-of-School Time (NIOST).
- Fourth grades and up completed a youth survey for the first time to provide youth experience baseline data.
- Pioneer programs voluntarily shared focus area data.

Del Mar initiative has been instrumental in helping us move a large and critical body of work forward that we had not had the capacity to manage earlier. As result of this support, we have been able to launch a community-wide effort that is already impacting over 900 students in the region.

Learn to Earn Dayton

At the end of year 1 (June 2018), the inaugural set of data from Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 was collected and analyzed. For the first time, the Dayton region had common data across 10 programs and 16 sites, which could be compared with pre- and post-data results.

Year Two:

Before the first strategic planning meeting in August 2018, the originator of the idea departed for new opportunities. I was tasked with keeping cohesion within the Collaborative, continuing the good work, and moving forward focusing on quality summer and afterschool programs.

From the inception, the SASC shared the leadership role and did not work as traditional organizations with a top-down approach. Options were explored. A smaller team of program providers, funders, data analysts, and the Fellow presented the options and proposed the best plan to move forward. This model was adopted for the SASC at the August 2018 strategic planning meeting.

And two more programs serving at two different sites joined the Collaborative. Now, 12 programs at 19 different sites, serving 1,250 youths are part of the SASC.

GOALS, SUSTAINABILITY, STRUCTURE

The Fellow's primary goals in Year 2 were to:

- Manage five (5) Collaborative Performance Measures with 100% participation from the twelve pioneers and 19 sites.
- Create professional development structures to support collaborative staff and leadership.
- Support the Encore movement. Recruit, train, and retain Encore volunteers.

- Build community awareness about and commitment to afterschool and summer learning in Montgomery County.

During the second year, the SASC sought to create a structure and onboarding process to recruit new members and engage potential members. The Partner Agreement [See Appendix] shares the requirements and benefits of joining the SASC. Professional development training was incorporated in the monthly sessions. Data showed need for social and emotional training; a special training session was held on May 4, 2019. Integral to the SASC moving forward, the Year 3 strategic planning session was held in May 2019.

Four focus areas emerged from the Year 3 Strategic Planning Session:

- Develop robust directory of the Dayton Regional Summer & Afterschool Collaborative (SASC)
- Data: Refining & improving processes, learning circles, integrating assessment tools to measure quality objectively
- Evidence-Based Strategies: Social Emotional and Culturally Responsive Teaching
- Structure: Recruitment, retention, and future growth

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE GOALS

For the SASC to thrive, it will be critical for the SASC to embrace its original founding principles: trust, organic nature, the fluidity of the group, and the shared leadership model.

The data gathering function has improved dramatically. Programs were able to identify and correct glitches in their internal systems. Some invested in personnel and now have dedicated staff solely responsible for providing accurate, timely data and others have invested in improved technology.

A viable, sustainable Encore volunteer program is not in place with the SASC. One Encore volunteer was successfully placed at one of the sites. It is difficult for programs to define specific administrative functions that can be assigned to Encore volunteers. Many of the programs use volunteers in their programs; however, these are not identified as Encore volunteers. Volunteers may be used for assessment or data gathering, but this requires time dedicated to volunteer recruitment, management, and retention.

In the academic year 2019-2020, the SASC is moving toward uncovering ways

- To improve quality in the programs
- To serve more youth and families
- To overcome barriers in obtaining equitable resources for all of the programs.

As I complete my second and final year of the Del Mar Encore Fellowship at Learn to Earn Dayton, I am thankful for the experiences, for working with all of the wonderful leaders and staff doing such great work in education. I've learned so much and have gained a new appreciation for the benefits of out-of-school time. Finally, know that "you can't do this job by yourself." It takes all of the dedicated work of the program providers, who are in a sense volunteering to be a part of the SASC: funders, University of Dayton Research, Learn to Earn Dayton, The Dayton Foundation and the Del Mar Encore Initiative.

National Conference for Community and Justice, by Linda Mercuri Fischbach

INTRODUCTION

For more than 40 years, the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ – formerly known as National Conference of Christians and Jews) has been dedicated to eliminating bias, bigotry and all forms of discrimination in the greater Dayton area. NCCJ provides youth education and leadership training in diversity, workplace professional development, and community advocacy through equity-targeted actions. But despite this compelling mission, NCCJ has struggled with financial uncertainty. As a result, in 2018 NCCJ’s leadership sought a Del Mar Encore Fellow to develop innovative strategies to sustain NCCJ’s mission and future viability.

INITIATIVE OBJECTIVE

The Fellowship project, as defined by NCCJ to The Dayton Foundation in June 2018, was threefold: 1) professionally analyze NCCJ’s readiness for a strategic alliance or merger; 2) outline a sustainability plan; 3) develop a marketing/ branding plan for the new organization.

THE DEL MAR ENCORE FELLOW

Linda Mercuri Fischbach, Ed.D.

Linda Mercuri Fischbach holds both a master’s degree in social agency counseling and a doctoral degree in counselor education/supervision. She taught in the University of Dayton’s Counselor Education program for 14 years.

Having worked in the trenches in Dayton’s nonprofit community since 1972, I brought experience and expertise to NCCJ. For 10 years, I worked as a maternal/child health nurse (RN) educating and supporting teen mothers. During the next two decades, I served as the Executive Director of Womanline Counseling Agency, assisting low-income women and their families. From 2003-2016, I provided mental health counseling and supervision as the Clinical Director for the Family Service Association in Dayton. These opportunities tempered me for the challenges I faced as a Del Mar Encore Fellow at NCCJ.



Year One:

Initially, I called upon my strategic planning, organizational and relationship-building skills, along with my historical knowledge of the Dayton nonprofit community, to analyze input from critical stakeholders; identify NCCJ’s mission, core values, target audiences and key programs; develop a feasible work plan; and discern potential merger opportunities or collaborative projects that would ensure NCCJ’s future viability. But above all, I relied on the support of NCCJ’s Executive Director, Ms. Mary Tyler.

A major factor in the success of the plan was my ability to garner volunteer help. I discovered that the “old-fashioned respect and request” strategy still worked to engage volunteers. I recruited both older Encore volunteers and younger undergraduate and graduate level college students to assist in conducting and analyzing research results that included: examining NCCJ’s prior strategic plan; determining diversity training best practices;

exploring innovative teaching methods; investigating local gaps in diversity services; developing relevant communication and fund-raising strategies; and identifying potential organizational merger or strategic alliance possibilities. Our age-friendly teams worked well together with youth sharing their technology skills and elders, their insights.

With research in hand, I convinced the NCCJ Board to conduct a board retreat in March 2019 which affirmed NCCJ’s mission as providing training/education regarding diversity, inclusion and equity with a special focus on youth in our community. NCCJ’s youth-targeted programs, Anytown Youth Leadership Retreat and PAYT (Police and Youth Together) Summer Camps, were particularly highlighted.

Having identified the youth focus, my logical next step was to identify potential merger opportunities and collaborative projects that would allow NCCJ to continue its renewed social justice mission with reduced financial constraints.

Following the NCCJ Board retreat, I coordinated preliminary talks with local organizations that provide programming in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion. Again my past nonprofit experience proved valuable. Remembering territorial fears in the past among small Dayton nonprofits, I approached the meetings with a declaration of camaraderie and a sense of “we are all in this together.” I presented the concept of a Diversity Center which could house several small equity-based organizations under one roof and share operational expenses, office equipment, administrative and technical staff. The agency representatives recognized the benefits of such a merger and were open to further discussions.

Then I contacted additional equity-focused organizations in the greater Dayton area to further discuss the Diversity Center concept and dialogued with The Dayton Foundation and Judge Walter H. Rice, both distinguished champions for equity, diversity and inclusion in our community. In addition, NCCJ’s board chair began talks with a local university to determine a potential partnership opportunity. To further support this process, I developed an action plan proposal with Encore volunteer, Fran O’Connor, to build an inclusive community by establishing a Diversity and Inclusion Center sponsored by the city, a local university and The Dayton Foundation. This proposal is currently under review.

“NCCJ has been fortunate to have Dr. Linda Fischbach work with us for the past year. As a respected community leader, Linda’s extensive nonprofit experience, intellect, creativity, knowledge of the community, as well as her personal connections have paved the way for new and exciting opportunities for NCCJ and our community. “

*Mary Tyler
NCCJ Executive Director*

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, FUTURE GOALS

Coordinating a feasible merger for NCCJ is a more complex process than I originally envisioned. Without a pledge of dollars, the venture is daunting. I am encouraged that local equity-focused organizations are expressing a willingness to work together and that the community is open to an inclusive vision.

My Fellowship ends in December. I pledged to have a transition plan for NCCJ in place and the organization plans to have an Interim Executive Director hired by December 2019. These goals are in progress. My remaining challenge is to identify a “diversity umbrella” that can house these small financially-struggling equity entities. I feel confident that with the help of a committed Board and dedicated volunteers, we can meet our deadline.

I intend to stay involved in equity work after my Fellowship ends. My experience at NCCJ has made me aware, through workshops, meetings and personal dialogues, of my own unconscious bias. I vow to continue promoting social justice with new fervor, in all my circles of influence.

St. Mary Development Corporation, by Frieda R. Bennett

INTRODUCTION

St. Mary Development Corporation (SMDC) is a faith-based non-profit organization that specializes in creating affordable housing communities and providing service coordination to connect residents to the services they need to continue living independently. The purpose of this project is to explore how telehealth and other technologies can be used to reduce the disparity of access to services and healthcare for those living in St. Mary’s communities.

THE DEL MAR ENCORE FELLOW

Frieda R. Bennett, Ph.D.

Frieda's undergraduate and master's degrees are in Business, and she holds a doctoral degree in Human Resource Development with concentrations in research and evaluation.

This project was a perfect match for my skills and experiences. I bring to the position experiences from Sinclair Community College (30 years) and Wright State University (5 years) as an educator and administrator. During my career, I had an opportunity to work with junior and senior high school students as well as adult learners (including the older adult population). The majority of the courses and workshops I facilitated ranged from basic computer skills to advanced software applications. As Assistant to the President and Dean of Business at Sinclair, I had interaction with many community leaders to develop partnerships and/or collaborate on projects. I have had an opportunity to serve as a member of boards, work with corporate clients as a trainer/facilitator, and serve as an evaluator for an accreditation organization.



Year One:

The first three months at SMDC were devoted to becoming acclimated to the host organization: reviewing data collected from residents via surveys and focus groups, reading reports, and shadowing Service Coordinators at the residences. These activities provided background information to better understand the residents served by SMDC. To become more knowledgeable about telehealth, aging in place, and current trends related to technology for seniors, I have participated in webinars, reviewed professional articles and national surveys, and attended conferences including The Business of Aging event sponsored by St. Mary Development Corporation in October 2018 and the TeleMed Leadership Forum 2019, held in April in Washington, DC.

"The Del Mar Encore Fellow program will transform how our seniors connect to services through technology over the coming decade. Frieda's expertise and enthusiasm have already helped us learn many new things about how our residents use—and don't use—technology. Her research is creating changes in our properties and we believe it will eventually even help change state housing policy. We could not have accomplished all this without the grant and Frieda's dedication!"

*Tim Bete, President
St. Mary Development Corporation*

LINK·AGE CONNECT SURVEY

A goal for the first year was to identify the baseline technical competencies of the residents. SMDC was given an opportunity to participate in the national 2019 Link·age Connect Technology Survey. The survey consisted of 29 items and was designed to learn more about older adults as users and adopters of technology as well as to gauge their knowledge of technologies in the categories of communication; entertainment; safety, security, and home; health and wellness.

The survey was administered by me and community volunteers in February 2019 during a three-week period. Residents had the option of completing the survey electronically (using a laptop or tablet) or paper/pencil; however, approximately 70% of the respondents chose to use paper/pencil. The average time for the residents to complete the survey (electronically and paper) was 30 minutes. Some of the key findings are listed below.

- The majority of the responses to the "open-ended" question identifying the greatest barrier to technology adoption was related to finances (cost of internet service, cost of devices, not enough income, etc.). Two-thirds of the residents (67.2%) had an income under \$15,000. The average income is \$12,300.
- Only 30% of the residents completed the survey electronically while 70% used the paper copy.
- The adoption of the smartphone is increasing. Smartphone ownership among the residents was 51.4%.
- The majority of the respondents live alone (91%).
- One-fourth of the residents spend 1 to 3 hours daily on the internet, but the majority (40%) never use the internet because they do not have internet service.

One-fourth of the residents own a personal computer (25%) or a laptop computer (25%).

- The top activities performed on the internet by SMDC residents were: Personal social media (35%)—(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.); research travel, recipes, current events, etc. (33%); watch YouTube videos (27%); online shopping (28%); banking and pay bills (27%); and read newspapers and other periodicals (25%).
- Taking a class or workshop with people their own age was the preferred method for learning about communication technology (35%).

STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE GOALS

As a result of conducting the survey, data was collected on technology ownership and usage among St. Mary's senior living communities. The survey results will be used to develop questions as we follow up with residents during focus groups and interviews.

Most of the participants chose to use the paper survey rather than the electronic version. As the project moves forward, it will be important to explore "why" they made this choice and identify barriers not captured in the survey data that may impede the residents from using technology in the future.

Education will be an essential factor to the success of the implementation phase of the project. Conversations with the residents indicated that they were not familiar with some of the terminology used in the survey or they did not have enough information for an opinion. Opportunities will be provided to help the residents become familiar with different technologies and engage them in a variety of learning activities that help to prepare them with the knowledge and skills needed to use the technology.

Next steps in the project include pilot testing voice-first technology and installing Wi-Fi in one of the buildings.

SMDC will seek partnerships with organizations that support the goal of utilizing telehealth and emerging technologies to reduce the disparity of access to services and healthcare for those living in St. Mary's communities.

THE LONG VIEW: WHAT OUR EXPERIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY HAS SHOWN US

The Del Mar Encore Fellows have given the community a glimpse into the impact and insight that could be unleashed, if we made a concerted effort to engage those who are in what some call the “third age”² of life – post-retirement, still active and engaged.

Each of the Fellows has come to their tasks with 40 to 50 years of involvement in our community, as citizens, as professionals and as volunteers. They bring the long view to their work – experience, context and reason. We, as a community, need to create systems that would take advantage of that perspective and wisdom, to address our challenges and opportunities.

CREATING AN AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY AND CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

We support efforts to make Miami Valley communities “age friendly,” as defined by the World Health Organization and AARP. By addressing the domains of transportation, housing, employment and civic and social inclusion, we can build a livable and equitable community for all people.

We also recognize the value of college and university students as excellent resources to support projects and initiatives for nonprofit organizations. The labor is “free” and the ideas and concepts that are implemented are state-of-the-art and based on the most current ideas, processes and tools. Collaborating with university programs also promotes “Gen-to-Gen” relationships.

IMPACT AND OBSERVATIONS

Employment: When a long-time employee leaves a workplace, there can be a tremendous loss to the organization of experience, practical knowledge and institutional memory. It doesn’t have to be that way. Some companies rehire retirees as consultants; others have recognized that there’s benefit to both worker and employer in creating a phased approach to retirement. There are many people who want to leave the demands of full-time employment but still want to be productive. As employers struggle to fill positions, rethinking the structure of jobs could help. Part-time, flexible work is attractive to many people, regardless of age. And more and more research³ is showing that mixed generation work teams are more productive than those made up only of people of a single generation.

Transportation Needs: Transportation and location is a consistent challenge for all organizations to provide services to current and potential clients. Improved access to dispersed services requires a higher level of commitment and effort at collaboration and referrals for service providers. Ideally, a community service report that collects the needs for various pockets of our communities and shares that information widely would facilitate

² Historian Peter Laslett identified [four stages of life](#):

First Age: an era for dependence, socialization, immaturity, and learning; Second Age: an era for independence, maturity, responsibility, and working; Third Age: an era for personal achievement and fulfillment after retirement; and Fourth Age: an era for the final dependence, decrepitude, and death

³ *Forbes*, April 13, 2018. “Why Multigenerational Workforces Are Productive And Profitable”

a collaborative process and help organizations to put plans in place to more efficiently and effectively provide their services.

Volunteers: As a community, we need a centralized approach to volunteerism and to encourage the participation and employment of encore talent. We must do a better job of supporting volunteers and connecting candidates to opportunities, which will in turn greatly increase service delivery to our community and enhance the lives of those in need of the services of nonprofit organizations.

Visibility: As part of this initiative's commitment to changing the conversation around aging, the Fellows have made presentations to numerous conferences and community groups, and represented both the Del Mar Initiative and their Host Organizations in television, radio, podcast and newspaper interviews and social media. A partial list of presentations and publications include:

- Jeanne Holihan, former Senior Fellow, wrote an op-ed in the Dayton Daily News
- University of Dayton Life Long Learning Institute – presentation by all Fellows
- Sherrè Collier, Linda Fischbach and Vel Hux were profiled in the Dayton Daily News
- Sinclair Community College SEEK conference -- presentation by all Fellows
- Sherrè Collier and Vel Hux were featured in The Dayton Foundation Social Media Fellowship campaigns
- Dayton Rotary Club -- presentation by all Fellows
- Sherrè Collier, Linda Fischbach and Vel Hux were featured in The Dayton Foundation videos
- Sherrè Collier was interviewed by Fox 45 as A Person You Should Know
- Philanthropy Ohio 2018 Conference
- Sherrè Collier was profiled in a Dayton Daily News article The Donor Next Door
- Kaye Jeter's work was featured in the Dayton Metro Library Staff Newsletter
- Frieda Bennett was profiled in the St. Mary newsletter
- Noreen Willhelm wrote two op-eds in the Dayton Daily News
- Noreen Willhelm wrote a profile of five Fellows for Dayton Most Metro
- Noreen Willhelm and Barbra Stonerock were interviewed for the Gem City Podcast

In Closing

We believe the “Gen to Gen” focus of older adults working with younger generations is the cornerstone to changing the conversation on aging and becoming more age-friendly as a community. The Fellows are demonstrating that the energy, talents and abilities of older adults can and should be shared with younger workers. We are learning new skills, particularly in the area of technology, and gaining a renewed vitality from them in return. And we know that there are many, many more like us in our community. The question to community leaders: how are you going to support and enlist this valuable resource in your work?

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 - Linda Mercuri Fischbach, Ph.D.
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 - Area Agency on Aging, PSA2
 - Brunner Literacy Center
 - Goodwill-Easter Seals Miami Valley/Miami Valley Works
 - Learn to Earn Dayton
 - NCCJ, National Conference for Community and Justice
 - Ruth Frost Parker Center for Abundant Aging of United Church Homes
 - St. Mary Development Corporation
 - St. Vincent de Paul
 - YWCA Dayton
- The Dayton Foundation, for recognizing the value of older adults and supporting the work of the Del Mar Encore Initiative

Appendices

- *Brunner English as Second Language Report*
- *Brunner Tutor Recruitment Plan*
- *Brunner Tutor Development Plan*

- *Assessment by Dayton Metro Library Branch Managers*

- *Learn to Earn Dayton Summer & Afterschool Collaborative Report*
- *Learn to Earn Summer and Afterschool Collaborative Partner Agreement*

- *NCCJ Report on Diversity and Inclusion Efforts in the Dayton Region*