



# SPECIAL REPORT:

## THE 7 HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL FAMILIES IN FLORIDA

### Background

In 2005, the Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families was awarded a US\$1 million, 3-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to improve marriages and families in Jacksonville, Florida, USA. The network consisted of 50 social service, government, and religious organizations and was enthusiastically supported by the Mayor of Jacksonville who pledged US\$500,000 in matching funds and provided seed money during the start-up phase of the project.

### The 2008 Report

Three years later (2008), a team of researchers commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services conducted an in-depth review of the program (as well as two other programs in Chicago and Boston). Their 138 page report, "Piloting a Community Approach to Healthy Marriage Initiatives in Three Sites: Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Massachusetts, and Jacksonville, Florida," consists of detailed evaluations of the design, conduct, and results of the program. The researchers interviewed program administrators as well as participants. They also gathered demographic and employment data on the participants and attempted to ascertain primary social stress points as well as the impact of the training on marriages and families.

**This report may be the most comprehensive government-commissioned report ever published on the practical application of the 7 Habits to social problems.** An edited and reformatted portion of Chapter 4 of the report follows below, preceded by 2 pages of key quotations. Comments of particular relevance to FranklinCovey have been highlighted. The entire report—a public document—is so impressive that it should be required reading for all leaders wanting to improve the quality of domestic life in their communities.

### Results

Network leaders believed that FranklinCovey's various *7 Habits* curricula were the best base upon which to build their customized training programs and "would be the most effective to help encourage positive changes..." Their goal was to reach 3000 families in 3 years. Inspired by such community leaders as the Reverend Jackson, Robyn L. Cenizal, and many others, the effort had already reached 400 families before federal funding was confirmed.

The spread of the program throughout the region has been noteworthy. For example, a church began to offer the *7 Habits* course as an additional service along with its empowerment program for young people to help them obtain their GED (high school diploma equivalency). The state legislature approved a project that allowed parents of juvenile offenders to take the *7 Habits* course instead of paying a fee for secure detention or home detention. So popular was *7 Habits* with Jacksonville City government employees that the Network recruited several employees to become facilitators and attend the family workshops. The Network also had local companies provide "lunch & learn" opportunities to their employees. Most significant is that the nearly 2000 program graduates to date report that they have learned to control stress and anger, have improved their planning skills, and have enhanced their families' well-being. An impressive 93 percent of participants say the *7 Habits* course has made a positive difference in their lives. See selected quotations below and the entire report at: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opr/strengthen/eval\\_com/reports/three\\_sites/three\\_sites.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opr/strengthen/eval_com/reports/three_sites/three_sites.pdf).

## Selected Quotations from “Piloting a Community Approach to Healthy Marriage Initiatives”

Prepared for

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
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“The Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families (JNSF) is a large-scale, community-wide initiative that engages an extensive number of partner organizations to provide marriage and family strengthening educational programs including child support education, and access to other family support services for Jacksonville’s families.”

“First, JNSF trains staff at social service agencies and other community organizations as well as interested professionals and community members to facilitate a specialized healthy relationships and lifestyle curriculum, the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Families*, developed by FranklinCovey.”

“JNSF designed the lessons contained in the *7 Habits* workshops to have universal appeal and to assist participants whether they are in crisis or seeking self improvement.”

“The course is taught by pairs of facilitators in 2.5-hour sessions twice a week for two weeks. However, this is flexible depending on families’ needs...”

“JNSF’s approach is described by staff as providing an inside-out approach to strengthening one’s family. The focus is to change their participants’ mindsets and then connect them with any services that might be needed...”

“Participants must complete all sessions in order to graduate.”

“There is a graduation ceremony within 21 days after the program is completed at which social service agency representatives are present and introductions can be made for graduates who need support from the particular agencies.”

“Graduations are large events hosted at City Hall in the past and now at the Children’s Commission. Each graduate receives a diploma.”

“Some facilitators also attend the graduation and describe the experience as quite emotional because some participants have not graduated from school before.”

“Once participants graduate from the *7 Habits* workshop...they are eligible for two other course offerings: the *8 Habits of Successful Marriages* and *Before You Tie the Knot*.”

“Their target goals have evolved as they discovered the universal appeal of the curriculum across Jacksonville’s families. The project’s aim is to provide services to 1,000 participants a year for the three years.”

“According to key members of the coalition interviewed during the site visit, adapting the *7 Habits* curriculum for Jacksonville’s families was the approach thought by coalition partners to be the most effective to help encourage positive changes and address challenges faced by Jacksonville families.”

“Another key to success was securing FranklinCovey’s commitment to provide an in-kind donation to train 100 trainers and revise and tailor their *7 Habits* curriculum based on Jacksonville families’ needs.”

“Network partners are organizations that add the *7 Habits* workshops to their existing menu of services.”

“Network partners allow their staff members time away from their jobs to be trained in the *7 Habits* curriculum; have facilitators conduct workshops as part of their job duties; recruit participants into the workshops from their caseloads and networks; hold workshops at their locations; and provide meals and a space for child care for workshop participants.”

“According to key stakeholders interviewed, there are several advantages to organizations that become network partners that outweigh the direct costs. Network partners’ staffs receive training in the *7 Habits* curriculum at no cost.”

“Training key staff in the *7 Habits* curriculum allows social service agencies to add marriage- and relationship-education classes to their menu of services to clients. Similarly, businesses can offer the workshops as a benefit to employees. Course materials are also provided at no cost to the agency.”

“An innovative feature of the JNSF approach is the development of supplementary material so that facilitators can provide contextualized examples of the *7 Habits* depending on the class audience.”

“Legislation passed by the State of Florida states that if couples complete the workshop (or a similar premarital workshop) before they marry, they will receive a discount of \$32.50 on their marriage license fee.”

“Addressing child support issues with families occurs several times during the *7 Habits* workshops.”

“One of the most powerful pieces of their curriculum is reported to be talking about the “circle of control,” when people can start to recognize if they have any control issues with their partner, which can be a form of emotional abuse.”

“From October 2005 to January 2007, JNSF held 62 workshops. There were 959 participants registered and 782 graduated. This represents an overall retention rate of 82 percent. These numbers do not count the approximately 400 workshop participants who went through the program before the Federal grant.”

“Of the participants who provided a response to the question about whether learning the *7 Habits* made a positive difference in their life, 93 percent responded ‘yes.’”

“Despite low wages, the average participant experienced considerable growth in employment and wages over the 7 quarters between 2005 and 2006. Although the real earnings gains for participants are impressive, they do not demonstrate a positive program effect because of the absence of a good estimate for how earnings would have evolved in the absence of program participation.”

“The participants we talked to all believed that the program elicited major changes in their lives and helped them develop a new way of thinking”

“For one participant, taking control also meant recommending the course to her ex-husband and his new wife: *‘My ex-husband and his new wife took the course and our attitudes had changed.’*”

“According to these participants, their expectations were more than met by the workshops.”

“When asked for recommendations or improvements, the participants offered the following suggestions: ‘Would recommend classes become a requirement before marriage...’”

“In and around the Jacksonville professional community, there is tremendous buy-in to the “*7 Habits*” approach. It has permeated city government, the Chamber of Commerce and churches.”

“The curriculum is well respected by several Jacksonville professionals who volunteer their time as facilitators to teach workshops at churches, halfway houses, schools, banks, or the naval base.”

“One bank that has offered several *7 Habits* workshops to employees is going to start offering the *8 Habits* course during the evenings. Also, an apprenticeship program is planning on providing the workshops for trainees and their spouses.”

“The project team, along with FranklinCovey, hosted a luncheon for about 30 local businesses who were interested in family-friendly policies.”

“The program is flexible enough to adapt the curriculum and service delivery structure to meet additional program goals as well as serve the changing needs of a diverse group of families who walk through their doors.”

“The Jacksonville initiative began by targeting low-income families; however, due to large successes in the early stages of the project, today JNSF targets all families and individuals with a goal of serving 3,000 Duval County residents.”

“Jacksonville’s program differs from both FFI and Catholic Charities in that JNSF employs community volunteers and training consists of attending a 3-day intensive FranklinCovey training session to receive certification to teach the curricula.”

“In Jacksonville, the JNSF program has a highly decentralized model where a multitude of over 50 network partners and individual facilitators are responsible for providing services to participants.”

“The number of participants served in JNSF was about six times the levels in Boston and Chicago. JNSF accomplishes these high enrollments by partnering with a very large number of agencies and by offering a low intensity intervention.” ■

## **Piloting a Community Approach to Healthy Marriage Initiatives in Three Sites: Chicago, Illinois, Boston, Massachusetts, and Jacksonville, Florida**

Prepared for

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
Administration for Children and Families

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Excerpts from Chapter 4

### **JACKSONVILLE NETWORK FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILIES; JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families (JNSF) is a large scale community-wide initiative that engages an extensive number of partner organizations to provide marriage and family strengthening educational programs and access to other family support services for Jacksonville's families. This initiative uses a three-pronged approach to serving clients by: training staff who work at social service agencies and other community organizations, as well as interested professionals and community members, to facilitate a specialized healthy relationships and lifestyle curriculum developed for Jacksonville; providing a gateway to access social services and other programs available in the community; and conducting a mass media and outreach campaign to promote positive family messages as well as how to obtain services that can

help renew and improve family relationships. By raising awareness, changing mindsets, teaching practical skills, and hosting events, JNSF's goals are to encourage healthy marriages and family relationships, increase paternity establishment and child support payments from non-custodial parents, improve parenting and child well-being, and foster financial self-sufficiency. Reflecting the JNSF core philosophy that all families can potentially benefit from their approach, the initiative targets a wide range of Jacksonville families including unmarried singles and couples, married couples, and parents.

In February 2003, JNSF applied for a three-year Child Support Enforcement Demonstration Section 1115 waiver which was awarded in May 2005. The lead agency awarded the grant is the Florida Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement (CSE), and the subcontractor is the City of Jacksonville, which houses the JNSF program. The final contract between the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement and the Florida Department of Revenue, CSE was signed by all parties in October 2005. Up to \$1 million in Federal funds over the three-year period is authorized to the project, and matching funds of \$500,000 over three years have been provided by the City of Jacksonville. In addition, the Office of the Mayor of the City of Jacksonville, a strong supporter of this effort, provided initial seed funding early on to help defray planning costs and start-up service delivery. Therefore, the JNSF coalition started delivering services over a year before receiving any Federal funding.

#### **4.2 Background, Planning, and Early Implementation**

##### **4.2.1 Project Goals**

The primary objectives, as stated on JNSF's website home page<sup>1</sup> are to foster:

- . Healthy, harmonious marriage and family relationships;
- . Financial self-sufficiency;
- . Effective parenting and child-rearing skills;
  
- . Involvement of non-custodial parents in children's lives.
- . Protection from domestic violence, child abuse and neglect;
- . Personal stability and well-being;
- . Family and marriage renewal and enjoyment.

Specifically, fostering the involvement of non-custodial parents includes providing assistance with paternity establishment, establishing child support orders, and improving payments on existing child support orders.

JNSF's organizational mission, as stated on the website<sup>ii</sup> is: to provide training, services and support to Jacksonville families in an effort to increase prepared marriages, reduce divorce rates, and increase financial and emotional support of Jacksonville's children.

JNSF's described by staff as providing an inside-out approach to strengthening one's family. The focus is to change their participants' mindsets and then connect them with any services that might be needed to address specific issues that may be affecting their lives, whether it is more in depth work on couple relationships, child support, parenting, employability, or financial issues. For instance, the JNSF approach is to ask participants; "What would it look like to have a loving, caring, financially stable spouse in the picture?" Once success has been defined by individuals, then the questions are asked "What might you need to do differently to get there?" and "How can you behave differently so that you get different results from what you've gotten in the past?"

The target area to be served under this grant is Duval County, Florida, which includes the City of Jacksonville. The total population in Duval County is 778,897 of which 66 percent is white, 28 percent is black, and 3 percent is Asian. Four percent of the population is Hispanic. Twelve percent of the population lives at or below the Federal poverty level. An estimated 51 percent of the population is married and 13 percent is divorced (U.S. Census, 2000). The proportion of live births to unmarried women in Duval County was 42 percent, ranging from 28 percent for whites to 62 percent for non-whites (Florida Department of Health, 2003).

In order to serve as a gateway for helping participants to become empowered to reach out for what they need for their family and then helping them connect to those services, initially JNSF targeted distressed 2-parent families who were unmarried or married as well as single parents who may or may not be in a relationship. Their target goals have evolved as they discovered the universal appeal of the curriculum across Jacksonville's families. The project's aim is to provide services to

1,000 participants a year for the three years. By the time service delivery officially began in October 2005 after the Federal agreement was signed, the project had already served 400 participants.<sup>iii</sup>

#### 4.2.2 Birth of JNSF: Building a Coalition from the Ground Up

The JNSF is the outgrowth of an initial coalition of approximately 20 non-profit organizations, social service agencies, churches, and local government agencies. The coalition was first convened in 2002 by two dynamic community leaders, a minister and his colleague who worked at the City of Jacksonville's Community Services Department in the Office of Volunteer Services. To help address increasing out-of-wedlock births and divorce rates, these leaders became interested in developing creative community solutions that encouraged positive family relationships. The impetus for the convening of the initial group was agreement that there was a community need for an innovative program that encouraged positive family behavior. The curriculum developed by Dr. Stephen R. Covey called *7 Habits for Highly Effective People* had been used by the city government and the local Chamber of Commerce to train managers. The coalition believed that providing this curriculum to families would help build healthy relationship skills in Jacksonville and the availability of a new source of Federal funding that encouraged diverse groups to come together to help deliver these services would work in Jacksonville.

Thinking about the social and economic challenges faced by families in Jacksonville, and their positive experiences with the Covey curriculum, the coalition decided to apply for Federal funding. They wanted to develop a community-wide initiative to provide a new set of educational skills-building classes that would promote healthy family relationships, and further connect participants who learned these new skills with available community services that could help address family economic and social needs. One of the conveners of the coalition who worked for the City (and later became the Executive Administrator for JNSF) took the lead in applying for the grant, partnering with the State of Florida's Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement, and articulating the coalition's vision for Jacksonville.

According to key members of the coalition interviewed during the site visit, adapting the *7 Habits* curriculum for Jacksonville's families was the

approach thought by coalition partners to be the most effective to help encourage positive change and address challenges faced by Jacksonville families. While families experiencing acute economic and social crises may already be participating in social programs, coalition members believed the JNSF program would be unique because it had the potential to expose families to a new way of thinking that would help reinforce what they were learning in other programs. Even more motivating for some coalition members was the potential to reach a broad group of families outside the social service delivery system who were not in crisis but wanted to learn a new set of skills to improve their relationships that could also lead to positive family outcomes such as marriage, better parenting, and improved outcomes for children. In the words of one of the coalition partners:

“...we expected to be able ...to assess people then connect them with the resources they were missing. They might come in for one thing, you talk with them, learn their situation and then are able to connect them to a service or an experience they didn't know was out there, but you can definitely see that it's needed. Like you go through anger management. I'm angry because I can't pay my bills, so let us help connect you with some budgeting classes or some counseling. I think we wanted to be able to be an umbrella and cover the city with resources. I think we wanted to be a change agent also in the sense that we didn't want to replicate or duplicate existing resources, but we wanted to force existing resources to work collaboratively and not be so constrained by turf. That's a process that is [ongoing].”

During 2003, as the coalition partners were negotiating their organizational structure, designing their service delivery model, and writing the Federal waiver application, the JNSF was bolstered by political backing from the Mayor of Jacksonville. The Mayor provided initial seed funding that was crucial to the planning process as well as brought the coalition's initiative into city government. Strong support from the Mayor allowed the JNSF to move forward without being sidetracked by potential funding disagreements or having to incorporate as a separate non-profit organization. Another key to success was securing FranklinCovey's commitment to provide an in-kind donation to train 100 trainers and revise and tailor their *7 Habits* curriculum based on Jacksonville families' needs. With the strong local

coalition secured, JNSF brought in the state and county child support agencies that supported their family strengthening efforts. In December 2003, JNSF submitted the application for a Section 1115 waiver to the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Despite funding from the city, the program could not become fully operational or develop their infrastructure by hiring fulltime staff members to manage the project without additional funding. According to interviews with the advisory board members, the coalition continued to meet monthly and plan service delivery for nearly two years without any Federal funding because of their collective passion to participate in the unique service delivery model, the chance to work with multiple partners who knew each other but had not worked together before, tremendous buy-in from the city, and the vision of the JNSF coleaders that the program would help fill a community need. Although all parties interviewed agreed that building the coalition was worthwhile, one of the lessons emphasized by all was that the amount of time and effort it takes to build and sustain representative community coalitions is substantial.

#### 4.3 Organization and Implementation of JNSF

##### 4.3.1 Florida Policy Environment

During the time that elapsed between JNSF's application in December 2003 and the grant award in May 2005, there were some policy changes that both bolstered efforts to startup program operations and posed implementation challenges. First, in 2003 there was a new mayor elected who firmly supported the core philosophy of JNSF. According to interviews with key informants, the goals of JNSF fit into the new mayor's overall vision for the city, “The Blueprint for Prosperity,” an economic development agenda that focused on building wealth and stabilizing families. The JNSF was seen by local officials as using a strategic and holistic approach to serving families. As one stakeholder commented, “[JNSF is] as close as anything the city has to case management for families.”

The support of the new mayor helped JNSF stay financially solvent by providing additional city funds that allowed for the continued development of service delivery and program planning while waiting to hear about Federal funding. State funds were also provided by the District 3 Office of the Florida

Department of Children and Families. In mid-2004, the Mayor decided to develop a city Office of Faith and Community-Based Partnerships, the first in the country formed at the city-level modeled after the similarly titled Federal office. This office supplied technical assistance to help faith-based organizations leverage grants and resources to meet community needs. The Mayor hired the minister who initially co-convened the JNSF coalition to be his Chief Community Officer (CCO) in 2003 and he became responsible for overseeing the Office of Faith and Community-Based Partnerships. It was decided to house the JNSF program within this newly created office and a staff member was loaned to the project on a part-time basis to help manage operations. Overall, because the CCO reported to the mayor directly, this organizational structure put JNSF in a strong position to innovate.

### 4.3.2 Organizational Structure

Although it was risky, JNSF decided to move forward with the implementation of their proposed service delivery model before securing any Federal funding. Before and after the receipt of Federal funding, the main service delivery approach and core leadership team remained intact. The JNSF implemented the plan they submitted in their grant proposal, which was to adapt the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Families* into a skill-building class for a diverse set of Jacksonville families, train facilitators, provide referrals for other services, and formulate a community media and outreach campaign.

...

**Figure 4-1 JNSF: Organizational Chart**

Department of Health and Human Services  
 Administration for Children and Families  
 Florida Department of Revenue  
 Child Support Enforcement Program  
 City of Jacksonville  
 Office of Faith-Based Initiatives 2004-2006  
 Children’s Commission 2006-Present  
 Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families  
 Executive Administrator  
 Social Services Coordinators  
 Administrative Aide  
 Agency Partners Network Partners  
 Agency Facilitators Individual Facilitators  
 1,000 Participants per Year

### Advisory Board

A driving force of JNSF’s approach is a strong community coalition that includes social service agencies, community groups, and churches. In order to keep coalition members engaged and draw on members’ expertise, one of the first steps in program design was the creation of a formal advisory board. Composed of the most active coalition partners, Board members were instrumental in early program planning and implementation by helping define a clear mission statement, setting target goals, assisting with finding network partners, and providing input into curriculum development. The Board meets regularly and provides input about service delivery and program implementation. Table 4-1 provides a list of Board members’ organizational affiliations.

**Table 4-1 JNSF Organization Affiliations of Advisory Board Members**

- . Christ Tabernacle Baptist Church
- . Duval County Extension Service
- . Florida Department of Children and Families
- . Crossroad Church
- . Project Reach
- . Freshministries
- . Florida Community College of Jacksonville
- . Lifeworks
- . Daniel
- . JCC

Source:

<http://www.coj.net/Departments/Childrens+Commission/Parents+and+Caregivers/JNSF/Mission.htm>

One of the original co-conveners of the community coalition became the Executive Administrator of the JNSF program. The Executive Administrator is primarily responsible for the overall direction of the project that includes implementing the program, developing a public relations strategy, building relationships with potential partnering agencies, soliciting corporate sponsorship, and seeking additional funding sources. The Executive Administrator oversees three other JNSF staff members. There are two social service coordinators, one who is primarily responsible for scheduling workshops and coordinating facilitators, and the other who provides follow-up services and referrals for participants. Both coordinators work on putting together a monthly graduation ceremony. The administrative assistant manages the client database and prepares materials for facilitators. Each staff

member is a highly qualified professional, and each has completed the *7 Habits* course. Based on their experiences, all staff attests to the ability of the curriculum to help change mindsets of families who take the workshops. They also found that the *7 Habits* workshops benefited them directly with their organizational and communication skills at work and at home.

JNSF engages various service providers in their community coalition to facilitate the *7 Habits* curriculum, host classes, recruit participants, and provide additional services if needed. Each month JNSF hosts a networking meeting for all its partner organizations, which includes relevant speakers and topical discussions. JNSF has a train-the-trainer approach and facilitators are carefully selected through an interview process. Facilitators must submit a resume and be interviewed by JNSF staff before being accepted into the training program. Each facilitator is required to enroll in a 3-day FranklinCovey curriculum training held once a year. After the training, facilitators must complete a “teach back” to receive certification.

The JNSF’s extensive community coalition is comprised of over 50 organizations and several individuals who are professionals in a variety of settings ranging from schools to social services. There are three different types of coalition members. First, the bulk of organizations comprising the coalition are termed network partners. Network partners are organizations that add the *7 Habits* workshops to their existing menu of services. Table 42 provides a list of JNSF’s network partners that are drawn from churches, social service agencies, and city departments. Some new partners that host classes are private businesses. Network partners allow their staff members time away from their jobs to be trained in the *7 Habits* curriculum; have facilitators conduct workshops as part of their job duties; recruit participants into the workshops from their caseloads and networks; hold workshops at their locations; and provide meals and a space for child care for workshop participants. Network partners generally sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreements with JNSF to formalize their commitment to provide facilitators, hold workshops, and help recruit and refer clients to workshops. Recognizing that some agencies may not have the staff or space available to meet all these criteria, some organizations are network partners although there is no formal MOU signed and they are not listed on the JNSF website.

Network partner organizations do not receive payment for running *7 Habits* workshops. According to key stakeholders interviewed, there are several advantages to organizations that become network partners that outweigh the direct costs. Network partners’ staff receives training in the *7 Habits* curriculum at no cost. Therefore, facilitators who work at network partners (termed “agency facilitators”) can upgrade their skill set at their job at a particular organization whether it is a social service agency or a business. This training adds to the quality of the partnering agency’s workforce and may contribute to facilitators’ increased productivity on the job. Training key staff in the *7 Habits* curriculum allows social service agencies to add marriage- and relationship-education classes to their menu of services to clients. Similarly, businesses can offer the workshops as a benefit to employees. Course materials are also provided at no cost to the agency. The direct costs to the agency include the staff member’s time, the use of a room to hold class, food for participants, and the use of a room to provide child care if needed.

#### Table 4-2 JNSF List of Network Partners

- A
  - American Heart Association Goodwill Job Junction
  - A.P.E.L. Health Services
- B
  - Housing Partnership of Jacksonville
  - Big Brothers Big Sisters of Jacksonville Hubbard House
  - Bridge the Gap In Him Ministries
  - The Bridge of Northeast Florida, Inc. Jewish Family and Community Services, Inc.
- C
  - Campus Crusade for Christ/Here's Life Inner City Lifeworks Jacksonville, Inc.
  - Catholic Charities Bureau, Inc.
  - Character Counts! In Jacksonville, MADDADS/JAX
  - Children's Home Society of Jacksonville Marriage for Life, Inc.
  - City of Jacksonville Victim Services
  - City Rescue Mission Northeast Florida Community Action Agency Inc.
  - Communities in Schools Northwest Behavioral Health Services
  - Community Connection of Jacksonville Oasis of Peace, Inc.
  - Community Rehabilitation Center, Inc.

## D

PACE Center for Girls  
Daniel Inc., Project Reach Foundation  
Department of Children and Families Project  
SOS  
Duval County Cooperative Extensive  
Duval County Health Department San Jose Church of  
Christ

## E

Salvation Army  
Early Learning Coalition of Duval, Inc., Second  
Chance Help Center

## F

Sisters Connection International Network  
Family Foundations Thormic  
Family Farm U-W  
Family Support Services of North Florida United  
Congregation for Communities & Youth  
First Coast Family Center The Women's Center  
Forward March  
FreshMinistries  
Full Services Schools of United Way

## SOURCE:

[http://www.coj.net/Departments/Childrens+Commission/  
Parents+and+Caregivers/JNSF/Network+Partners.htm](http://www.coj.net/Departments/Childrens+Commission/Parents+and+Caregivers/JNSF/Network+Partners.htm)

The second type of coalition member is the individual facilitators. This group includes interested community members who are employed in various professional positions such as nurses or teachers who generally work directly with families and children and have communication skills that allow them to excel in facilitating classes. JNSF staff organizes the participant groups and the independent facilitators teach the 7 Habits workshops. Individual facilitators teach classes at a variety of locations including churches, community centers, schools, correction centers, or low-income housing developments around the city.

Individual facilitators receive a \$200 stipend for teaching a complete set of workshops. The stipend is not intended to pay facilitators for their time, but to offset their expenses for travel and other incidentals. JNSF reports that many of the independent facilitators do not take the stipend because they want to volunteer their time. All agency and individual facilitators must sign a three-year commitment to teach for the project, and agree to use the guidelines provided to them by JNSF that specify, among other things, that they may not

modify the curriculum to include a religious component.

Lastly, there are organizations that participate in the community coalition that are referred to as agency partners. These organizations actively participate in recruitment activities and will provide services for free or at discounted rates to JNSF participants who are referred to their agencies. These organizations do not provide any facilitators or host classes at their locations. Examples of agency partners that are part of the JNSF referral network include the Family Counseling Services, which will offer a limited number of family counseling sessions for free and then at discounted rates to JNSF workshop participants. Agency partners do not allow staff to facilitate 7 habits workshops as part of their job duties. However, some interested staff working at an agency partner organization decided to become individual facilitators on their own time. This means that they facilitate classes outside of their work hours and offsite. For example, some individual facilitators work during the day but facilitate 7 Habits workshops on their own time in the evenings at local churches or public housing complexes. One individual facilitator interviewed worked at night, but found time to teach several workshops during the day in a variety of locations such as a halfway house and a juvenile detention center.

JNSF's community coalition includes a mix of secular and faith-based organizations. JNSF found that faith leaders in communities like to offer the course to their church parishioners, particularly in low-income areas where churches may not have the money to offer expensive marriage retreats. One example includes a church that brought in the 7 Habits course as an additional service along with its empowerment program for young people ages 18 to 20 that provides assistance in obtaining their GED. Faith leaders of churches are not facilitators but they may assist as mentors or coaches if they choose to do so. Some faith leaders and their spouses have been workshop participants and have recommended the course to their congregations and to other faith leaders in the community.

JNSF staff have instructed facilitators not to incorporate religious content or prayer into the curriculum, and to go by the premise "when in doubt, leave it out." Program staff and facilitators interviewed agreed that the curriculum does not include any specific religious content and offers a variety of helpful activities, examples, and exercises to reinforce the subject-matter under discussion.

### 4.3.3 Organizational Changes

In mid-2006, the Chief Community Officer and co-convenor of JNSF left his position in city government and returned to the ministry. Around the same time it was decided to move the JNSF within city government to a different department. JNSF moved from the Office of Faith and Community-Based Partnerships into Jacksonville Children's Commission. The Children's Commission was created by the City in 1994, has a dedicated funding stream, and staff are experienced in raising money from private sources and foundations. The head of the Commission reports directly to the Mayor. The Commission provides resources to help families promote positive child development practices. They provide free programs and services in the areas of: parenting/family, health, child care and early learning, after school and youth development, and special needs. The Commission focuses its resources on primary prevention and early intervention activities.

Key stakeholders interviewed cited several reasons for the organizational changes. First, JNSF and the Commission have similar missions to improve the lives of caregivers and children and often serve the same families. Moving JNSF into the Children's Commission could help enhance the program's sustainability by taking advantages of their similarities and jointly writing grants instead of competing for scarce funding. The Commission's programs were also seen as good recruiting sources for parents who attend one of the many Children's Commission programs.

Some stakeholders interviewed expressed concerns about the move. These concerns include: questions about how well positioned JNSF would be within the Children's Commission to innovate; a new bureaucracy could contribute to delays in program implementation; and whether JNSF would lose influence with their partnering agencies, especially churches when moved out of the Office of Faith and Community-Based Partnerships. Although these concerns were expressed, the project has seen increased recruiting from Children's Commission programs such as Healthy Start.

In conclusion, strong buy-in and the ensuing seed funding from the City of Jacksonville were essential in facilitating initial startup of the JNSF program operations before the receipt of Federal funding. The mission of JNSF was a natural fit with the newly elected mayor's platform to build the economic as

well as family infrastructure of Jacksonville. Hiring one of JNSF's co-conveners as the city's Chief Community Officer gave the initiative high visibility, a direct line of communication with the Mayor, and helped bring in social service agencies and faith-based partners. **Securing an in-kind donation from FranklinCovey to tailor the 7 Habits curriculum and providing facilitator training attracted several diverse partners to the coalition. The tremendous buy-in from the community coalition, a clear service delivery model, and highly qualified program staff and facilitators ensured the successful startup of program operations.** The move to the Children's Commission also seems to have added new recruiting sources.

## 4.4 Initial Operations and Services of JNSF

### 4.4.1 Recruitment Strategies

JNSF primarily recruits participants from network partners, who consist of a group of several organizations originating from social service, faith-based, local government, education, business, and other community organizations; therefore, there are many potential avenues for recruitment. The project also recruits through staff members' presentations, mass mailings, and community outreach efforts. Over time, as more and more families have been served, word of mouth and self referrals have become increasingly important. Described below are several examples of JNSF's extensive community-wide recruitment efforts.

Social Service Agencies: In order to reach out to Jacksonville families who could benefit from family strengthening while working on other issues, JNSF has recruited from a wide range of social service programs such as employment, financial literacy, foster care dependency programs, Head Start, halfway houses, and substance abuse programs. For example, the city rescue mission's Life Builder program has been an effective recruitment source for men. This is a faith-based, 18-month drug and alcohol treatment rehabilitation program. Life Builder participants are recruited for participation in JNSF's workshops after completing about a year in that program, after they are clean and sober and are preparing to re-enter society and be reunited with their families.

Events and Outreach Efforts: JNSF hosted and participated in several local events to raise awareness about their family strengthening initiative, promote the services of their network

partners, and recruit for classes. Staff set up tables and booths at events to recruit families into the program. In addition, they sent out flyers in a mass mailing to targeted zip codes. The JNSF also has a user-friendly website that provides information about the program, locations of upcoming classes and also allows for online registration.

Shands Hospital: JNSF works with a local hospital that is the area's largest indigent care facility. The staff from JNSF recruits from baby showers held quarterly for expecting parents. JNSF does not recruit from paternity establishment records from the hospital because couples' names and contract information are not released.

Word of Mouth: Over time JNSF staff has found that word-of-mouth recruiting of neighbors and friends is providing an increasing stream of participants. In addition, they have found other family members who accompany participants to graduation decide to enroll in classes. The project reports that word-of-mouth referrals are the second largest source of recruiting participants after referrals from partner organizations.

Juvenile/Criminal Justice System: Recruiting through the corrections system resulted in a successful set of workshops for young incarcerated fathers. The facilitators were so impressed with the youth that they started a book club at the detention center. Parents of juvenile offenders also have been recruited for services. **Recent state legislation approved a pilot project that allows parents of juvenile offenders to take the 7 Habits course instead of paying a fee for secure detention or home detention.**

Churches: Several churches participate in the initiative and offer classes to their congregations. These classes are secular and are solely taught by the trained facilitators. In one case, a pastor and his wife participated in the workshop. One church has a local TV talk show and conducted an interview with JNSF's executive administrator during which they encouraged people to attend the workshop with them.

Employers: **The 7 Habits curriculum was popular with Jacksonville City government employees; therefore, JNSF has recruited several class employees to become facilitators and also to attend the family strengthening workshops. JNSF also targeted local companies to provide "lunch & learn" opportunities to their employees in order to increase**

**awareness of the program.** Partnerships have been established with Ever Bank, NE Florida Builders Association apprentice program, Health Ease and United Healthcare. The project also reached out to the U.S. Naval Air Station in Jacksonville and trained facilitators to run workshops for military families. When talking to businesses, the program emphasizes that promoting healthy family relationships and decreasing stress for employees can help reduce absenteeism and work injuries.

Schools and Family Literacy: As part of an overall effort to focus on family literacy, which means increasing parental involvement in children's schooling and improving communication among parents, JNSF targets several schools and youth programs to recruit parents. For example, facilitators conducted classes on Saturdays at an elementary school for the parents of kids participating in a 6-week study program intended to help parents stay engaged in their children's education. While the children participate in their program, the parents are offered various activities at the school, including the Jacksonville healthy marriage initiative's workshops. **JNSF started offering evening classes to parents whose middle school children are enrolled in 7 Habits for Healthy Teens classes. JNSF staff mentioned that some parents and teenagers took the 7 Habits for Successful Families in Jacksonville course together to build communication skills and healthy family habits.**

JNSF provides several services to aid families' participation in the program. These include child care, meals, and transportation. JNSF does not offer any monetary incentives for participation. Almost all classes are open to the public except in instances when the classes are held at residential institutions such as halfway houses or juvenile detention centers.

While the JNSF project has engaged a wide variety of coalition partners across Jacksonville to recruit families, the initiative also faced some recruitment issues during early implementation. Initially recruiting couples and fathers was a challenge, so program staff adjusted their strategies. They began working with local fatherhood initiatives, and recruiting from local athletic programs. They also have involved more fathers by establishing a solid referral partnership with the Jacksonville Urban Leagues' employment and Head Start programs. Part of this adjustment in recruitment strategy was to move away from using phrases such as "at risk" because some families felt that they must have

serious problems in order to enroll in classes. Instead the initiative focused on positive language such as “making good marriages better.” Program staff found that some families do not want to admit that they might have problems, or do not want to see themselves as “at risk,” and therefore may shy away from program participation when positive messages are not promoted.

Some of the recruitment issues are more challenging to address. These are faced not only by JNSF, but also by all large-scale community efforts that engage a large group of coalition members and serve diverse clients. One recruitment issue is how to keep coalition partners accountable for recruiting participants when there is no enforceable contracting agreement or funding provided. An unanticipated recruiting challenge discussed by JNSF coalition members is that some churches approached for the project did not want to use a secular curriculum with their congregation members. Churches were anticipated to be a large potential source of recruitment for couples. It has been difficult to find another source, although the move into the Children’s Commission has potential to increase couple recruitment because JNSF will have access to parents whose children participate in the Commission’s services.

#### 4.4.2 Intake and Screening

All individuals who are interested in signing up for the JNSF program must complete a registration form. This form is available on the internet, provided by network partners or can be requested and then sent out via mail. The registration form asks participants demographic information and provides a checklist of issues that the individual or his/her family identify as stressful and causing disruption in the past year. Participants submit the form online, by mail, or by fax. If a potential participant checks off any issue, the social service coordinator contacts participants to discuss any immediate service needs and, if appropriate, confirms registration. If any domestic violence issues are identified at this point, the social services coordinator will make an immediate referral to one of five network partners that provide domestic violence related services.

On the first day of class participants also fill out a Family Information Form that asks more detailed questions about services they are currently receiving, how involved they are with their children, and whether they pay child support. Since classes are open to the public and advertised widely, the

program also accepts walk-in participants on the first day of the workshop as long as they fill out a registration form.

#### 4.4.3 Curriculum and Programs

JNSF’s curriculum is a customized version of the popular book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families* by Stephen R. Covey called *The 7 Habits of Successful Families in Jacksonville*. The Board and JNSF staff worked with staff from FranklinCovey to conduct focus groups to obtain a baseline assessment to gauge community need and interest. Staff also tested reading levels of selected participants to gauge how the language and examples from the Covey curriculum, *7 Habits of Highly Successful Families*, would need to be adapted to serve all interested families in Jacksonville. The JNSF and the Board members put much time and effort working with Covey staff to modify the curriculum to a 6th grade reading level and were quite happy with the curriculum development process and the end product.

“We had focus groups that actually went through to see how they would relate to the language, the scenarios, were they relevant. And I think [families] appreciated being included in the process. Just not someone coming pushing this down on me. I’m getting an opportunity to be involved.”

The course is taught by pairs of facilitators in 2.5-hour sessions twice a week for two weeks. However, this is flexible depending on families’ needs, and may consist of more, shorter sessions given over a longer period, or fewer, longer sessions given over a shorter period. According to project staff, the ideal class size ranges from 12 to 20 participants. Other than facilitators and participants, the only other people who are allowed in the classes are referred to as “Table Coaches.” These are usually volunteers from the community who want to be part of the workshops but are not trained facilitators. Their role is to help participants engage in the workshop activities and to provide support if needed. Sometimes facilitators who are in training or who want to refresh their skills may volunteer as Table Coaches to experience firsthand the classroom environment.

The curriculum is based on seven healthy family habits, described in Table 4-3. When learning about each habit, participants are provided with activities and worksheets to help them develop an understanding of why each habit is important and

how it applies to their lives. Examples include creating a family mission statement and family calendar. Practicing these habits in the classroom can help participants focus on developing their individual and family goals, enhance communication skills, formulate concrete steps to achieve these goals, and think about ways to sustain success.

#### Table 4-3 The 7 Habits of Successful Families in Jacksonville

With FranklinCovey, the Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families developed the 7 Habits of Successful Families in Jacksonville. The 7 healthy habits that are key to successful families are:

1. Be Proactive. The first habit of successful families is to take control by saying "I can do it," rather than saying "I can't do it." You can't control everything that happens to you, but you are in control of you. Steps to take control of you are defined as: (1) Pause: stop what you are doing and pause, (2) Think: think about what you should or should not be doing, and (3) Do: do what you should do.

2. Begin with the end in mind. The second habit of successful families is to decide what is important and what is wanted in life. Unsuccessful families, in contrast, don't know what's important in their lives. Think about what is important to you, and remember that the things you believe in and care about the most are your values.

3. Put first things first. The third habit of successful families is to spend time doing that which is best for the family, while unsuccessful families spend time doing what is not good for the family. Putting things first means to define the most important things for you to do such as: pay bills, get a job, spend time with your family, get an education or skill, and clean your house. Less important things for you to do are: go out with friends, watch TV, chat with friends on the phone, play video games, and read a good book. A goal is something you want to accomplish. This is done by: (1) set a goal, (2) write down steps to reach your goal, (3) pick a date to reach your goal, and (4) do it!

4. Think win-win. The fourth habit of successful families is to think that everyone can win in relationships, whereas the unsuccessful families think that if someone wins, then someone else must lose in relationships. When you do kind things for people, you are giving to your "relationship balloon."

These kind of things are called, "Gives." People trust you more when you build up your "Gives."

5. Listen first, talk second. The fifth habit of successful families is to listen first and talk second. Unsuccessful families, on the other hand, talk first and listen second. Successful families work together as a team, while unsuccessful families do not work together as a team. Three steps of listening are: (1) make eye contact, (2) look for body language, and (3) listen first, talk second. Three steps of talking are: (1) use body language, (2) use appropriate words, and (3) speak with an appropriate tone of voice.

6. Synergize. Working together as a team constitutes the sixth habit of successful families. Each family member is different, but you need each person to make your family complete. Focus on the positive things that make your relationship better. Recognize the advantages of working as a team: two can do more than one, and this is called synergy.

7. Sharpen the Saw. The seventh habit of successful families is to take care of the individual and the family. When you take time to take care of yourself in the four areas of body, brain, heart, and soul, you are sharpening the saw. Caring for yourself in this manner allows you to take care of your family.

In addition, the curriculum includes specific discussions of child support and marriage issues. For example, Habit 2 is called Begin with the End in Mind. During class time, when discussing this habit, participants set a goal or determine where they see themselves in the future, and then work towards that goal. This habit is discussed in the context of the participants' relationships that can include their partners/spouses, children, and social networks. During the presentation of Habit 3, Putting First things First, the Office of Child Support Enforcement video, Power of Two: Voluntarily Acknowledging Paternity, is shown. This video provides a discussion of the importance of paternity establishment, meeting child support obligations, and father involvement in children's lives. These issues tie directly into the lessons learned in Habit 3, which are to focus on meeting important obligations first and not let smaller issues get in the way.

An innovative feature of the JNSF approach is the development of supplementary material so that facilitators can provide contextualized examples of the 7 Habits depending on the class audience. Examples include a discussion of different health, education, economic, and relationship issues that

families face. Families with low-incomes may be facing an immediate crisis such as eviction. Other families may be developing long-term plans for home ownership. The examples developed for facilitators give real life examples that they can draw from when talking to participants from different socioeconomic groups about how they can apply the *7 Habits* to their own lives. JNSF believes that the curriculum must be made relevant to the diverse group of families that they are serving and are constantly adapting their supplementary material to address family needs.

While parents attend classes, their children can participate in JNSF's Character Building Children's Program. This program teaches a curriculum that uses stories, constructive play, role-play, games, arts and crafts, and a variety of other techniques to teach core ethical values called the Six Pillars of Character. These pillars include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship to children of varying ages. The Character Building Children's Program partners with adult volunteers who provide supervised play and character-building activities to children ranging in age from 3 to 12 years. Teen volunteers ages 15 to 18 may also assist with children's activities in exchange for credit towards community service hours.

Participants must complete all sessions in order to graduate. If a participant misses a particular session, they are offered the opportunity to make up that session at an upcoming workshop. There is a graduation ceremony within 21 days after the program is completed at which social service agency representatives are present and introductions can be made for graduates who need support from the particular agencies. The timing of the graduation is based on the FranklinCovey premise that it takes 21 days for individuals in their courses to develop a habit.<sup>iv</sup> Graduations are large events hosted at City Hall in the past and now at the Children's Commission. Each graduate receives a diploma. Some individuals and organizations donate their services or gifts to graduates. For example, at one graduation a photographer donated his time and equipment to take family pictures. Some facilitators also attend the graduation and describe the experience as quite emotional because some participants have not graduated from school before.

Once participants graduate from the *7 Habits* workshop, if they are interested in continuing to build couple relationship skills or decide to marry, they are eligible for two other course offerings: *The*

*8 Habits of Successful Marriages*, and *Before You Tie the Knot*. The *8 Habits* course is for unmarried or married couples who are interested in how to enhance their marriage and relationships, learn about the successful components of marriage, and explore whether marriage is for them. The *8 Habits* course, which is based on the *7 Habits* but geared toward couples, also includes an additional habit specifically for couples. Table 4-4 describes this curriculum. This course is offered by JNSF once a quarter and is taught by one of three certified facilitators trained specifically in the *8 Habits* curriculum.

**Table 4-4 *The 8 Habits of a Successful Marriage***

To build a healthy marriage, it is first necessary to understand the structure of marriage. The "8 Habits" curriculum teaches couples that the healthy structure of marriage involves unselfish companionship, effective communication, and high-trust character. Stable relationships, like healthy homes, are built on a foundation of trust. This strong foundation creates a safe environment which promotes and supports a framework of effective communication. With these in place, the protective roof of service-oriented, unselfish companionship can be achieved.

These eight habits of healthy marriage may be grouped into the three components: unselfish companionship, effective communication, and high-trust character. The first three habits of healthy marriage – being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, and putting first things first – all contribute to the development of high-trust character. The next three habits, defined as thinking win-win, listening first and talking second, and synergizing, are essential to effective communication. Unselfish companionship, the third main component of healthy marriage, is achieved in part through sharpening the saw, and lifting yourself by lifting others. Specifically, the 8 Habits include:

1. Be proactive – Being proactive builds a foundation of trust. A marriage built without trust is not a marriage built to last.

2. Begin with the end in mind – It is important to set goals for each of the four cornerstones of marriage – to live, to love, to learn, and to leave a legacy. In order to build a healthy marriage, it important to think about how you want to live, love, learn, and leave a legacy together.

3. Put first things first – In marriage, put the big rocks, the things that are most important to your marriage such as spending time with your spouse, first. Put the little rocks, those less important things such as watching TV, last. You will find that if you put your big rocks first, you will have a healthier, more fulfilling marriage.

4. Think win-win – When your thinking includes a “lose” for either you or your spouse, it becomes a “lose” for your relationship. A lose in any form fosters feelings that are not part of a healthy marriage.

5. Listen first, talk second – It is important to make eye contact, look for body language, and avoid “door slammers.” When you are trying to listen to understand, put a zipper on your mouth...an industrial-size zipper.

6. Synergize – Synergy – creative couple teamwork – occurs when you follow two simple rules: value one another, and recognize strengths. When you have a conflict or want to brainstorm a project, it is important to clearly identify the problem or opportunity, try to understand his or her needs, share your needs and ideas, celebrate your differences and value one another’s ideas, and find the best solution for the two of you and your marriage.

7. Sharpen the saw – Each of you has a body, a heart, a mind, and a spirit. If you are not sharpening the saw in any one of these four areas, you are neglecting the needs of the whole person.

8. Lift yourself by lifting others – Words are only part of service to your partner. When you do things for your spouse, you are giving to your “relationship balloon” and building unselfish companionship.

The *Before You Tie the Knot Workshop* is specifically for couples who intend to marry. There are two workshops covering four topics including communication, conflict management and resolution, financial responsibility and spending plans, and parenting responsibilities. The course is taught by a JNSF facilitator who also offers the course through the Duval County Cooperative Extension Service. Couples must attend both sessions in order to receive a completion certificate. Legislation passed by the State of Florida states that if couples complete the workshop (or a similar premarital workshop) before they marry, they will receive a discount of \$32.50 on their marriage

license fee. The child support messages are not presented in the *8 Habits* or *Before You Tie the Knot* workshops because couples are encouraged to think about successful marriages.

Interviews with program staff and the advisory board highlight the importance of the facilitators as key to the successful retention of participants and the popularity of the program. After a JNSF social service coordinator sets up the groups, facilitators call all program participants before the course starts. As shown on Table 4-5, as of September 2006, JNSF trained a total of 73 facilitators from 2004 through 2006. Over time JNSF has increased the numbers of agency facilitators that they train each year from four in 2004, to 21 in 2006. In 2006, JNSF stopped training the individual facilitators. Because agency facilitators are affiliated with an organization that can host classes, it is a more economical investment for the program to have facilitators responsible for recruitment and referrals of participants.

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#### 4.5 Linkages with Other Service Providers

Key components of the JNSF approach include helping participants’ individual and family needs that will help them reach their full potential. Changing participants’ mindsets is the first step—providing a linkage to service providers to address issues that they want to work on is the second. On the first day of class, participants receive a comprehensive resource packet filled with materials about services available in Jacksonville. During the course and after completion, there are several points of follow-up to make sure participants are receiving the services that they request. Figure 4-2 highlights the follow-up services provided by JNSF staff.

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JNSF follows up directly with participants starting on the last day of the *7 Habits* course. The JNSF social services coordinator attends the last class, makes a short presentation about the availability of services in Jacksonville, and passes out the Family Planning Tool. The Family Planning Tool first provides a description of a number of issues that families face, after each issue there is a checklist of services that they can request. Participants check off the services that they are interested in. There are 10 issues identified on the Family Planning Tool, including the following:

- . uncontrollable anger, physical or emotional abuse;
- . couples communication;

- . child custody or child support;
- . loss of a loved one;
- . teen issues;
- . children's issues;
- . alcohol and/or substance abuse;
- . incarceration of self, spouse or other family member;
- . job loss or employability issues;
- . eviction or displacement;
- . participants may list any other issues they may be experiencing

Participants are asked to identify services that may assist themselves or their family members deal with a particular issue. At the end of the Family Planning Tool, participants are asked to list the two services that they feel are the most critical that they need right away. The project generally waits to refer participants to additional resources until the end of the class when they fill out the family planning tool so that they prioritize the issues that they have been thinking about and want to work on. However, if it is clear that someone has a critical issue the project tries to connect them with needed services immediately. There are several services provided by network or agency partners to which JNSF staff can refer participants. Services may include the following:

- . family, child, couple and individual counseling;
- . anger and stress management;
- . *Before You Tie the Knot premarital workshop or 8 Habits of a Successful Marriage*
- . support or assistance with child support issues including custody cases, establishing paternity, or payments;
- . assistance, support with substance abuse issues;
- . job readiness preparation/employability skills;
- . temporary shelter and affordable housing opportunities;
- . parenting classes including co-parenting after divorce;
- . educational preparation, tutoring and support;
- . financial literacy training and Individual Development Accounts (IDA)s

Once facilitators submit participants' Family Planning Tool forms to JNSF, the social services coordinator initiates discussion with each participant and then matches the services requested by the family with an appropriate network partner. The social service coordinator contacts the network partner and also sends a letter to the family with the network partner's contact information. The original plan was

that network partners would contact JNSF to tell them that they followed up with a family, but agencies, due to small staffs, did not have time to follow through. To address this issue, one social service services coordinator changed her work schedule so that she can stay later in the evening to make phone calls to families when they are more likely to be at home to make sure that they have followed up with agencies. In the opinion of the advisory board, the ability of program staff to adapt to families' needs is "monumental."

The social services coordinator also makes follow-up contacts monthly to determine families' status and progress. Workshop participants who live in institutionalized environments such as residential substance abuse programs cannot be contacted until their release. Families are followed for one year after graduating. Staff reported that one challenge to providing follow-up services is that some participants they serve are quite transient and often move, making it difficult to keep track of them because letters are returned and phones are disconnected. Although follow-up with families who change locations can be challenging, network partners interviewed during the site visit were quite impressed with the level of JNSF's follow-up. As one social service agency staff member commented, "I get enough calls from the [JNSF] staff here for information on a specific client who calls them to know that it's starting to take root. That someone would be going through the program and a couple months later they're in crisis and they call the staff here. And [the client's problem] will be of such a nature that has something to do with [name of agency] or me so they ask, does this make sense, can you check into this, who can I contact?"

Opportunities for follow-up by JNSF staff and network partners occur at several points after the workshops end. Representatives of several partner service agencies attend the monthly graduation ceremony, held for graduates of all workshops during that month, so that interested participants can connect with them. The project identifies which partners can most benefit the graduating families and invites those partners to be at the graduation for families to connect with them right then, which helps to minimize the risk of families not receiving services. JNSF also reconnects with families by sending out follow-up surveys six months after graduation and by hosting an annual family reunion.

Staff reports that participants have been particularly interested in receiving information about

opportunities for employment training and financial literacy education. One financial resource the project connects participants with is an agency called Fresh Ministries, which provides guidance through the eligibility process for IDA, a government matched individual savings account for low-income working families that allows them to save up to purchase a small business, a first home, or to fund their education. If it turns out they are not eligible for IDA, the project can connect them to a number of other partners for financial literacy education. The project refers participants to the Urban League which provides an employability training program, and provides its clients with resume tips, job search assistance, and access to jobs programs through its partner organizations. Some coalition members interviewed reported that the referral piece was difficult to develop initially, because organizations were wary of a new initiative, but as they have begun working with partners the project has developed good relationships.

#### 4.5.1 Child Support System

Addressing child support issues with families occurs several times during the 7 Habits workshops. First, participants can indicate on the workshop registration form if they need help with an open child support case. They will be immediately referred to the local Child Support Enforcement office for assistance. On the first day of class, participants receive a resource packet which includes copies of brochures answering a range of child support questions. Child support and paternity establishment are then progressively discussed during the course, and the Power of Two video is shown during a class. Participants are instructed to let project staff know if they have special issues with child support that need to be resolved. The project staff gives their contact information to the local Duval County CSE representative, who contacts the participant and looks into any issues that they can help resolve.

Participants are made aware during the child support component of the workshop that a representative from the local child support office will be present at graduation who can speak with them about their specific child issues. This gives participants the opportunity to ask detailed questions or to seek advice on the specifics of their case in more depth than the facilitator was able to cover during the workshop. Local CSE staff noted that they talk with a number of people at graduation about their child support cases.

The Duval County CSE staff provides training and child support materials to the JNSF facilitators, including information on the benefits and procedures of establishing paternity, and child support orders. JNSF has also provided overviews of its project and programs to the local CSE staff during meetings with them to familiarize the local child support staff with the program and to answer their questions. Any child support clients who come into the local office and could use the program's services are referred to it. In addition, personnel from the local CSE work with staff at Shands Hospital to distribute information about the JNSF program to unmarried parents who have established paternity. Recently Duval County child support staff appeared on a local radio program to discuss child support issues.

#### 4.5.2 Domestic Violence

The project worked with local organizations that address domestic violence (DV) in developing its DV protocol. JNSF reports a close relationship with these agencies. These organizations represent an extensive community network for making DV referrals. JNSF's network partners address a wide spectrum of DV issues, from safety planning to temporary housing, to strategy intervention. The project's definition of DV includes physical, mental, and emotional abuse. One of the most powerful pieces of their curriculum is reported to be talking about the "circle of control," when people can start to recognize if they have any control issues with their partner, which can be a form of emotional abuse. In discussions about marriage and what they might want a marriage to look like, facilitators are careful to center the dialogue on the idea that a marriage should first of all be safe and healthy. To distinguish a good relationship and marriage, they talk about different concepts, like control, and the fact that no one should have control over anyone else. During those discussions there are opportunities to talk about controlling personalities, which in some cases may identify a violent or potentially violent situation and therefore may raise a red flag with facilitators.

If a DV situation comes to light, the response depends in part on the situation. The JNSF staff and all facilitators are trained by one of the facilitators who works at a domestic violence agency that is a network partner. The first question is whether there is threat of harm to the child because of DV. If so, facilitators have been advised that if a situation requires immediate attention they should contact JNSF staff, who will contact the family for an

immediate referral. The project has made some DV referrals. One referral was of a mother identified through the registration form's assessment as having moved to Jacksonville to escape a DV situation. She was referred to a partner with a DV counseling support group, which was what she felt she needed now that she was in a safe place and starting life in a new city. Other referrals have been made by facilitators based on issues that participants raised in workshops.

#### 4.5.3 Media Campaign and Community Outreach

Key components of JNSF's media and outreach approach include hosting public events, attending community outreach events and engaging in a media campaign. The project engages in three types of activities. First, JNSF sponsors city-wide events for the City of Jacksonville. Second, JNSF attends related community events, staffs booths and recruits families to attend workshops, and makes marketing presentations to potential network partners. Lastly, the project has conducted a media campaign. These activities are described in detail below.

From 2004 to 2006 JNSF hosted an annual event called the Family Summit, which consisted of plenary speakers and a series of workshops led by agency staff and other community providers about a wide range of topics pertaining to families. For the most recent summit in 2006, they partnered with Shands hospital and provided a health fair for families. Workshops are held to help educate families about a variety of health, economic, and child issues. Another goal is to reach out to professionals to give them ideas about how to engage more volunteers and to work with diverse families. Some examples of workshops include: "Dads Do Matter!," "Parenting Counts!," "Economic Self-Sufficiency," "Working with Teens Today," "Road Map for Healing: Assessment for the Development of Thinking and Life Skills," "Domestic Violence, Assisting the Ogre! And The Belief System Challenge," "Public Relations for Non-Profits," "Building Capacity Through Volunteers," and "Working With Diverse Populations."

In 2007, instead of holding an annual Family Summit at the convention center, the project decided to hold four, smaller community events. The first event was called "Fathers Make a Difference Fun Day." JNSF promoted the event by distributing fliers for parents at over 900 day care centers and through their partner organizations, as well as some radio spots and morning TV shows. One radio station aired a

regular show, "Dad Connection," live from the event. Over 1950 people attended the event, which included speakers on topics framed around 10 ways to be a better dad, fun activities dads and their children could participate in together, and a resource area where about 30 resource providers shared information on a broad range of services.

Other outreach approaches to raise community awareness about JNSF and promote family strengthening include staffing booths at large events at the Jacksonville convention center, such as the Black Expo, World of Nations, Women's Ministry Conference, the Hip Hop Symposium, and Evening with the Mayor. JNSF also partners with churches and other agencies to sponsor smaller events. For example, they partnered with First Coast Christian Outreach on the "Dads that Matter Breakfast" that was attended by 600 people. They also partnered with the Health Department on their annual Health Symposium that provides mental and physical health information and services to approximately 2,500 individuals from low-income communities. The project team, along with FranklinCovey, hosted a luncheon for about 30 local businesses who were interested in family-friendly policies.

JNSF staff serves on several conference panels. For example, staff presented a panel at the "Boys to Men" conference sponsored by the Health Department. The project team presented a workshop at the H.E.R.I Conference for Home School families. The workshop focused on the importance of family strengthening and parent modeling of positive behavior as foundational to student success. The project team served as guest presenters at a conference for local Spanish-speaking churches. The conference provided an opportunity to reach out to pastors representing the Hispanic community.

JNSF conducted several media campaigns that included distribution of brochures, radio advertisements, and Public Service Announcements. Thinking strategically about when and whom to target, JNSF ran two different media campaigns around the winter holiday season to promote positive family messages, including spending time with children rather than thinking solely about buying gifts. The project also has paid for commercials that run before specific events like the Family Summit and the Women's Ministry Conference. Some of the campaigns have been more successful than others. One that had more limited success included a mailing of brochures in targeted zip codes consisting of approximately 500 homes in

that area. This effort resulted in 7 or 8 calls from people wanting to register for workshops.

## 4.6 Participant Characteristics and Experiences

### 4.6.1 Workshop Participant Information

From October 2005 to January 2007, JNSF held 62 workshops. There were 959 participants registered and 782 graduated. This represents an overall retention rate of 82 percent. These numbers do not count the approximately 400 workshop participants who went through the program before the Federal grant.

### 4.6.2 Management Information System (MIS) Data Highlights of Participant Characteristics

JNSF has a state-of-the-art Management Information System that was created by the Information Technologies Division of the City of Jacksonville. All data from the registration and assessment forms are entered into the MIS by JNSF's administrative assistant. Once the data is entered, detailed reports can be generated, and JNSF can keep high quality records of participants' enrollment and graduation rates. In the first year of program operations from October 2005 to September 2006, a total of 464 participants completed the program. Participants' data is sent to the Florida Office of Child Support Enforcement and matched to open child support cases using participants' Social Security Numbers.

Table 4-6 highlights selected characteristics of all individuals who have participated in the JNSF program during the first year of operations. The program attracted nearly equal proportions of men and women; 52 percent of respondents were male and 48 percent were female. A plurality of participants was middle-aged, with 41 percent between the ages of 25 and 44 years. Eighteen percent of participants were under the age of 20, and 36 percent age 45 and older. The majority of participants (64 percent) identified themselves as black and 27 percent of participants identified themselves as white. The other 9 percent of participants reported their race as Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Alaska Native, or Other. Of all 464 participants, only 2 percent identified as Hispanic.

Just over one-half, or 53 percent, of the participants were married, 5 percent were in couple relationships but unmarried, and 42 percent were single at the time of data collection. None of the 464 participants

responded that they were divorced. Of 275 participants who answered the question on number of children, 45 percent had 0 children, 23 percent had 1 child, 20 percent had 2 children, and 12 percent reported having 3 or more children.

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In Table 4-7, we find results from the MIS questions on the interaction of participants with the program in terms of whether their children attended and how they found out about the program. Of 464 participants, when asked if a child attended the program, 4 percent of respondents answered "yes," 1 percent "no," and the remaining 95 percent did not answer this question. In the first year of JNSF operations, 75 percent of participants heard about JNSF through referrals from other agencies. The next largest source of information about the program came from word of mouth (16 percent). During the first year of operations, 8 percent of participants heard about the program through media sources such as websites (4 percent), direct mail (1 percent), and radio (3 percent).

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Table 4-8 shows some interesting gender differences in how program participants hear about the program. A greater percentage of female participants hear about the program through friends (20 percent) compared to male participants (13 percent). More men hear about the program through agency referrals (81 percent) than women (70 percent). There are also differences by marital status in how participants hear about the program that are worth noting. A higher proportion of unmarried couples tend to hear about the program through friends and media sources rather than agency referrals compared to married or single participants. For example, 21 percent of unmarried couples hear about the program through friends compared to 17 percent of married and 14 percent of singles. Similarly 13 percent of unmarried couples hear about the program through various media sources compared to 8 percent of married and 8 percent of single persons.

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Some JNSF participants reported events which caused stress or disruption during the year prior to course enrollment (see Table 4-9). The largest sources of family stress for JNSF participants in the past year were due to alcohol or substance abuse, domestic violence, or loss of a loved one. Eighteen percent of the 464 participants reported substance abuse issues in the past year. Of all respondents, 16 percent reported uncontrollable anger, physical or emotional abuse in the past year, and 16 percent

reported loss of a loved one due to death, divorce, or separation. Other stressful events included loss of a job due to personal matters (10 percent), child support or custody hearing (8 percent), and 6 percent each reported incarceration of spouse, non-custodial parent or family member, eviction from dwelling or property loss due to repossession, and removal of a child from the home by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Other stressful family events reported by less than 5 percent of total respondents included truancy or juvenile delinquency, unplanned pregnancy, pregnancy of a minor child, and loss of a job due to downsizing.

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In order to gauge changes in attitudes over time, JNSF staff administers a pre-assessment when they start the workshops and a post-assessment including the same questions when they complete the classes. In Table 4-10 we find answers to two post assessment questions reported by participants in the JNSF program who completed the program. The majority of participants who completed the *7 Habits* course said that they will always or almost always encourage their child to have a positive relationship with the other parent. Specifically, of 390 respondents, 55 percent said they will always encourage their children to have a positive relationship with the other parent and 21 percent said they will almost always do so. Fourteen percent that they will never encourage their children to have a positive relationship with their other parent and the remaining 10 percent that they will seldom or sometimes encourage their children to have such a positive relationship. Of the participants who provided a response to the question about whether learning the “7 Habits” made a positive difference in their life, 93 percent responded “yes.” Slightly more married participants responded that the class made a positive difference (95 percent) compared to single participants (89 percent). While the positive response appears overwhelming, there were many participants (three quarters) who did not provide a response to this question.

#### 4.6.3 Participants’ Involvement in the Child Support System

Table 4-11 presents data on the paternity establishment of Jacksonville participants. A total of 165 participants had open child support cases. Therefore, 36 percent of all JNSF participants were matched to the IV-D agency records. Sixty-three percent of participants matched in the child support system were identified as custodial parents. Of the

165 participants with an open child support case, 63 percent of participants had 1 child associated with an open case, 28 percent had 2 children, and 9 percent reported having 3 or more children. Sixty-four percent of the 165 participants with open child support cases reported having established paternity for the youngest child. Of the 106 participants who had established paternity, 9 percent reported that they had done so during the first year of JNSF program operations, while the remaining 91 percent establishing paternity prior to program participation.

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Table 4-12 presents statistics on the child support involvement of the participants at the Jacksonville site. Of 165 participants with open child support cases, 27 percent reported having a youngest child covered by a court order for child support (44 cases). Of the 44 participants with court orders, 30 percent reported that the order for the youngest child was established during the first year of JNSF program operations. Seventy percent of the clients had a child support order for their youngest child established before the program began.

Table 4-12 indicates that the amount of child support payments varies. More than 75 percent of payments were above \$500 monthly. A small percentage (7 percent) made over \$2000 in payments monthly (\$501 per week multiplied by 4.4 to convert to monthly units). Of the 38 participants who made monthly payments, almost 80 percent indicated that they made at least 1 child support payment throughout the 12-month period. Over three fifths (63 percent) of participants made any payments at least half the year (a minimum of 6 months out of a 12-month period). A smaller percentage of participants made child support payments as ordered. Sixty-three percent made child support payments as ordered in at least 1 month during a 12-month period while only one quarter made payments as ordered for at least half of the year. Thirteen percent made arrears payments.

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Table 4-13 displays additional descriptive statistics on the frequency of non-custodial parent visitation, and types of financial support based on participant reports. Of 29 participants who responded to this question, over sixty percent reported non-custodial parent visitations at least once a week or every other week, 31 percent less than once a month, and the remaining 7 percent reported no contact. Of 275 respondents to the question on type child support provided, 90 percent reported no support. Only 7 percent reported formal child support, 2 percent

reported direct support from parent, and the remaining 1 percent reported receiving TANF.

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#### 4.6.4 Participants' Employment, Earnings, and Receipt of Unemployment Insurance Benefits

An analysis of the job market experience of JNSF participants enriches our understanding of the targeting of JNSF and the need for the type of employment services offered to participants in the second level of service. As with IHRMI, we draw on data for JNSF participants matched with data from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) during 2005 and 2006. A successful match between participant information from the MIS program data and data from NDNH requires valid demographic information and some record of an individual's employment or use of UI. As shown in Table 4-14, of the 464 JNSF participants who had data entered into the Jacksonville Management Information System, two-thirds, or 377 participants, had valid information that could be matched to the NDNH. About one in five participants (19 percent) did not match with NDNH because of invalid information. Sixteen percent of JNSF participants did not match in NDNH, apparently because they were not employed in a formal job and did not receive UI benefits. As a result, the match yielded employment, earnings, and UI receipt data on about one-third of participants, or 377 out of a total of 464. Nearly all of the matches involved employment, based on information drawn from UI wage records and the W4 new hire database.

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How much did the matched participants work? Table 4-15 demonstrates 75 percent were employed in at least 1 quarter during 2005 and 2006. However, only 37 percent of the employed participants worked for 7 quarters, while 35 percent worked for 4 to 6 quarters, 17 percent worked for 2 to 3 quarters, and 11 percent worked for just 1 quarter during the 2-year period. On average, employed participants worked about 4.9 quarters during the 7 quarters examined.

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Approximately 10 percent of the matched sample came from the match with UI benefits, indicating they had received UI at some point. About 43 percent of those receiving UI did so for one quarter and 53 percent for 2 or more quarters. Job turnover was common among the participants matched in the W4 system over the reporting period. On average,

participants held 2.7 jobs during 2005 and 2006. Approximately 40 percent maintained one job during 2005 and 2006, while 39 percent had three or more jobs.

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One would expect differences among JNSF participants in attachment to the labor market, depending on demographic characteristics and marital status of participants. Figure 4-3 displays the higher rates of quarterly employment among married participants, as compared to cohabiting individuals and single individuals who were not cohabiting. For all JNSF participants, the percent employed remains steady at about 50 percent, falls for one quarter to 40 percent, and then increases to 57 percent by the last quarter of 2006. Married participants have a similar pattern, starting at 61 percent in the first quarter of 2005 and rising to 68 percent in the last quarter of 2006, but with a dip to 50 percent in the second quarter of 2006. In contrast, unmarried couples started off in 2005 at approximately 50 percent, rose to 58 percent (reaching nearly the employment rate of married couples), then dropped significantly in the second quarter of 2006, but did not recover and fell to 47 percent by the end of 2006. The employment rate of single participants began at low levels, then dipped for a quarter, and subsequently recovered but only to a level slightly above 40 percent.

Multivariate regressions (negative binomial regression models) provide estimates of the relationship between participant characteristics and quarters of employment (ranging from 0 to 7) over the 2-year period, holding other forces constant.<sup>35</sup> In addition to standard independent variables such as age, race, gender, and marital status, the regression also included a 0-1 variable that equals 1 if participants experienced any of the following stressful events in the past year: domestic violence, substance abuse, incarceration of a family member, job loss, eviction, unplanned pregnancy, child support or custody hearing, loss of a loved one, and truancy or juvenile delinquency.

The results in Table 4-16 show that the age of participants and marital status each are independently related to the number of quarters of employment. Participants who are between the ages of 25 and 34 or 35 and older had significantly more quarters of employment compared to participants under the age of 25. Married participants also had more quarters of employment compared to single participants. Gender, race, and the occurrence of

stressful events were not significantly associated with more quarters of employment.

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The matched data provide information on quarterly reported earnings of JNSF participants during 2005 and 2006. The data in Table 4-17 show that the average earnings of participants were low. Employed participants averaged \$4,115 in the first quarter of 2005, a figure only about \$1,000 above \$3,198 of earnings that would go to a full-time full-quarter (13 weeks) minimum wage worker in Florida. Only about 42 percent of JNSF participants earned more than the full-time minimum wage salary in their first quarter of employment.

One striking fact is that married participants averaged a \$3,400 earnings advantage over single participants or unmarried couples. However, the gap between married and unmarried couples narrowed over the two year period from about \$1,300 to about \$400. Participants with children earned about \$1,200 per quarter more than those without children. Older participants, who typically have more work experience, earned more than younger participants.

Despite low average initial wages in 2005, there are several notable increases in wages over time. In 2006, employed participants' annual wages adjusted for inflation increased by 9 percent from their initial level to approximately \$4450. Table 4-17 shows changes in wages by group between the first and last quarters observed.

Race, gender and age were important factors distinguishing differences in earning growth. Between the initial and last quarters of employment, average earning of black participants increased by 20% compared with a decline of 11% in average earnings in the White population. Male earnings started off lower than female earnings but then increased on average by 20 percent while female earnings stayed relatively constant across the two periods. Participants experiencing stressful events earned only about half of the earnings of other participants, but the average earnings of this group did increase by 20 percent between the first quarter of 2005 and the last quarter of 2006.

Table 4-18 presents the results for multivariate modeling of the relationship between demographic characteristics and wage growth. Model 1 controls for the initial wage, and the number of quarters

worked during the reporting period (ranging from 1 to 7 quarters). Model 2 includes these variables plus demographic characteristics and stressful events. Model 1 shows that a higher initial wage level in 2005 is associated with greater annual wages in 2006. While this effect is statistically significant, the magnitude is low. When demographic characteristics are controlled in Model 2, the effect of participants' initial wage in 2005 remained statistically significant. The number of quarters employed is positively associated with wage growth over the two periods. Compared to participants who are younger than 24, participants who are older than 35 have significant and positive changes in wage growth. Notably, stressful events experienced the year prior to participation in the JNSF program is associated with a decline in wages over the two periods. There are no significant differences in wage growth over the two periods by race, gender or marital status.

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Analyzing employment and earnings data drawn from the NDNH shows that for the average participant, there is growth in employment and wages over the 7 quarters between 2005 and 2006. However, a significant proportion of JNSF participants did not participate in the labor force. Many employed participants earned significantly lower than the minimum wage. It is apparent from the NDNH analysis that a small proportion of participants collect unemployment insurance to fill in employment gaps— less than one quarter received any UI during the 2 years. Descriptive analysis highlights that employment participation and wages increased from the initial quarter to the last but there was little variation by race and gender. Similar to national studies, age is associated with higher employment levels and wages among program participants. These results were confirmed in the multivariate analysis. Stressful events experienced by families were associated with lower earnings over the 2 years, and age was positively associated with increases in earnings.

In sum, this analysis of participants' demographic data matched to employment, wage and unemployment insurance information from NDNH administrative records shows that the program was successfully able to collect valid social security number and name combinations from more than four fifths of program participants. Despite low wages, the average participant experienced considerable growth in employment and wages over the 7 quarters between 2005 and 2006. Although the real earnings gains for participants are

impressive, they do not demonstrate a positive program effect because of the absence of a good estimate for how earnings would have evolved in the absence of program participation.

#### 4.6.5 Perspectives of Selected Participants

To gauge the perspectives of program participants, evaluation team members completed a group interview with a small number of recent program participants, observed a *7 Habits* workshop, and engaged in several informal conversations with program graduates at a graduation ceremony. The participants we talked to all believed that the program elicited major changes in their lives and helped them develop a new way of thinking. These participants cited benefits from the program in that they learned the importance of the seven habits and how to relate these habits to their own lives and helped their relationships with their spouse, children, and other family and friends.

One participant felt that the curriculum influenced how she interacted with her children: “As parents we think that we control our kids but we don’t have control of their behaviors. You can discipline a child but you still cannot control that children...my big eye opener was the circle of control – realizing that I cannot control other peoples actions and that the only person I have control of is myself.”

Another participant described how the workshop empowered her, and explained that she believes it helped her handle life and improved her listening skills: “I felt myself to be a good listener but I was not always a good listener. But after I took the class I saw there is room for improvement and things that can be done. I thought I was a good listener, but after sitting there and taking the class, some of the examples that were used and some activities that we did, sometimes with my kids...I had a tendency to take the conversation over. I would assume where they are going and my daughters are in the class with me, so we just had an awesome time. It made me go back and think that, even if they are my children and I am their mother, I need to respect them by listening to everything that they are going to say.”

Participants identified the classes that addressed control, listening and respect, and loving oneself as their favorite classes. They continue to use the tools, such as the calendar, and have integrated the habits into their everyday life. As one participant described: “I have a calendar and say by Friday, I am going to do

this. I write it down, and I set dates for things. I give myself a week to do certain things, and if it’s already Thursday, I am telling you that by Friday I am going to accomplish 3-4 things before the weekends. Because I set goals, and I accomplish these things.”

For one participant, taking control also meant recommending the course to her ex-husband and his new wife: “My ex-husband and his new wife took the course and our attitudes had changed.”

The importance of being proactive and taking control was another important theme discussed in the workshop. As one participant commented, “We learned about being proactive and taking control. I use this a lot, because you’re confronted with people, whatever their personalities are, some people like to talk at you and at that moment you have to be listening and then speaking second. I’m able to keep myself in a place where I’m going to be respectful. Whatever their personality, I can face it, regardless of the situation. I use that every day. If there’s a situation, instead of being negative, I am thinking positive. I am wondering why are they upset, and looking at what they are saying first, before I respond second.”

Thinking win-win was also valued by the participants. As one participant described, “I’m taking control of what I want to do and I’m not giving it up. For 17 years I’ve raised my children myself...I always thought what is it I can do to bring this family together...The class was so encouraging. I don’t have a lot of friends, I have a lot associates, I have thousands. So I have to remember to think win-win, because it’s not about getting what you want today, but thinking long-term wins where everyone wins.”

According to these participants, their expectations were more than met by the workshops. The workshops represent a new beginning for some participants and they liked the emphasis of taking care of oneself first and then thinking about how to apply these lessons within their families. One participant offered that she decided to have a divorce and that she was going back to school as an example of taking care of herself first: “I am still married but I am going through a divorce...being proactive about your life, and expecting each person as an individual, and understanding that people do have different choices...and goals in their life, you can be together, but you still have to remember that you’re separate people. I believe that is why I am where I am at today, because I am being proactive

now, and I've had to make a decision. Marriage is beautiful, and I prefer it, and I adore it, but when another person's not going a positive way, you have to take control of that situation. Being proactive is why I had to make the decision of the divorce, because I am being proactive and beginning with the end in mind that I want a better and positive life for me and my children."

The participants felt that the workshops were good for people in crisis and that those in crisis could:

- . Grasp the concepts;
- . May need follow-up;
- . Addressed issues that were important to the participants;
- . Made participants feel valued and special;
- . Gave participants a sense of worth, accomplishment and competition.

When asked for recommendations or improvements, the participants offered the following suggestions:

- . Not enough time;
- . Room size not always adequate;
- . Should include part 2 of workshop (opening up, honesty, mentoring, pep talk, measuring progress and need for additional services);
- . Would recommend classes become a requirement before marriage;
- . Every workshop should have two different facilitators (either male and female, black and white) preferably a couple to simulate family structure.

#### 4.7 Conclusions

The JNSF initiative adds a new menu of services to the existing social service mix in Jacksonville, acts as a services gateway for participants from the community who may need help but are not sure where to turn, and keeps the coalition of diverse community groups, County Child Support office, churches and city agencies engaged and working together. With the strong political backing and initial seed funding investments from the City of Jacksonville, the JNSF has been able to create a community-wide effort to address a perceived community need to strengthen families. With the momentum and buy-in from diverse groups including the Mayor, city agencies, the County Child Support Office, several churches, non-profit social service agencies, domestic violence referral agencies, the Chamber of Commerce, and more

recently private businesses, the project set laudable target goals at the outset, developed a strong service delivery model to achieve them and engaged in a community-wide outreach campaign.

The project's vision is to serve a broad group of Jacksonville families and expose them to a new framework which will encourage thinking strategically about setting goals and thinking long term for themselves as well as their families. To achieve these objectives, JNSF designed the lessons contained in the 7 Habits workshops to have universal appeal and to assist participants whether they are in crisis or seeking self improvement.

Thinking about relationships in the context of participants' lives and providing child support education is important to the JNSF approach. The program focuses on achieving healthy relationships and recognizes that for some participants, it may not be the right time in their lives for marriage, and that families may need help with understanding child support issues. Workshop participants are encouraged to think about relationships with their families and partners, what they want for their future relationships, and how to work together to address child support issues. Starting with the individual and then expanding to think about the relationships that individuals have helps broaden the appeal of the program beyond marriage education into family strengthening. As one facilitator described succinctly, "I was a strong woman before I entered marriage." The curriculum is well respected by several Jacksonville professionals who volunteer their time as facilitators to teach workshops at churches, halfway houses, schools, banks, or the naval base. The JNSF staff and community coalition clearly leveraged a broad group of facilitators and agencies to create a program with minimal financing that exposes families all over Jacksonville to a curriculum that can help strengthen family relationships and provide education and services to address child support issues.

For participants in the program who learn the 7 Habits but need additional help on attaining the short-term and long-term goals they set for their families during the workshops, JNSF developed relationships with a variety of partners to work with program participants. From the point of view of referral agencies' staff, clients may be more receptive to assistance after being exposed to the 7 Habits framework. In and around the Jacksonville professional community, there is tremendous buy-in to the 7 Habits approach. It has permeated city government, the Chamber of Commerce and

churches. Once clients, congregation members, or employees are exposed to thinking about their past family successes and failures and what they want their families to look like in the future, JNSF staff believes that participants may be more receptive to learning and taking in the messages during the next set of services they receive.

JNSF serves a large number of Jacksonville families and engages with several network partners in their community coalition. Similar to other large CHMI projects in other cities, several JNSF partners and staff commented on the challenge of sustaining a broad based initiative. Similarly, staff turnover at partner agencies means that JNSF loses a trained facilitator from that agency and at times the good will to participate in the network. As one individual commented, "I think we've had and continue to have some difficulty getting some of the member organizations to fulfill their MOUs...It's still not where we would like it to be. I think also with recruiting families into the program, identify from their own audiences, potential clients or customers that can go through the training to get them in the system to be able to change their attitudes and behavior...I just don't think we have gotten the level of recruitment that we would desire...it takes a constant and conscious effort. And that takes time. It's a challenge, no question about it."

Some other challenges that JNSF faces are how to engage more unmarried couples to take workshops together that could spark specific conversations about their marriages, relationships, paternity establishment, and child support that may or may not happen outside of classes. If couples attended the 7 Habits workshop together, they may be more comfortable following up and attending the next level of relationship services such as 8 Habits for Successful Marriage or Before You Tie the Knot. There was also a concern expressed by stakeholders about how to reach out to families with diverse structures.

JNSF is creatively addressing the issue of recruitment and sustainability by pulling in new partners that can be new sources of couple recruitment and financial support if it is offered through their Employee Training programs. One bank that has offered several 7 Habits workshops to employees is going to start offering the 8 Habits course during the evenings. Also, an apprenticeship program is planning on providing the workshops for trainees and their spouses. Promoting employee health and decreasing stress can help make the workplace more

safe and productive and also improve family functioning. Making changes and enhancements to the program fits into the overall approach of JNSF. The program is flexible enough to adapt the curriculum and service delivery structure to meet additional program goals as well as serve the changing needs of a diverse group of families who walk through their doors.

## 5. IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In this section, we compare the three initiatives in their early implementation of their own Community Healthy Marriage Initiatives to look for key distinctions that may be of note to other grantees involved in similar programming.

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The variations in service provision reflect the different models of the demonstration programs. Services are provided either directly by the lead organization or indirectly through partners. Catholic Charities employs a direct model, providing services at WIC Centers under its own management. Partner locations provide services for JNSF while FFI uses a combination of its own sites and partner sites. The referral network of each site is extensive and it is clear that client needs are a priority. All sites provide additional curricula, direct services, and referrals in areas including employment assistance and education services. In Chicago, DCSE is especially active regarding child support as they recruit unmarried couples from local area hospitals to help identify and resolve child support issues. In each of the three sites, links to other service providers constitute an integral part of the process of stabilizing families. The large array of additional services and referrals supplies a comprehensive set of skills for participants.

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An important distinction among the demonstration programs involves the population targeted for services. FFI has largely been a resource for low-income men; however with the help of partner organizations, FFI has extended its focus to include low-income women. RRL's targeted effort plans to serve 100 low-income couples per year for each year of the project. The extent of FFI involvement with each RRL participant can be quite intense. It is not uncommon for some participants to receive case management and a number of services simultaneously. The Jacksonville initiative began by

targeting low-income families; however, due to large successes in the early stages of the project, today JNSF targets all families and individuals with a goal of serving 3,000 Duval County residents.

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Another difference between the programs is the strength and size of their partner coalition and the manner in which their coalitions were formed.

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The JNSF program is unique in that its coalition formed exclusively for the purposes of this project. The coalition began with an active Advisory Board that burgeoned into a coalition containing a mix of over 50 faith-based and secular organizations. Lastly, in terms of service delivery, the grantee organizations represent a range from very centralized control of partnerships services to highly decentralized control.

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In Jacksonville, the JNSF program has a highly decentralized model where a multitude of over 50 network partners and individual facilitators are responsible for providing services to participants.

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### Recruitment and Outreach

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Recruitment strategies differ significantly across the grantee organizations.

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Jacksonville began its outreach efforts to target low-income families; however, with the increased use of their varied network partners that include social service providers, FBOs, local government agencies, schools, and businesses, JNSF has been able to expand outreach efforts to include all Jacksonville families.

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Some common challenges of the Community Healthy Marriage Initiative involve problems with class scheduling and recruitment. Scheduling can be particularly complicated as many of the participants and facilitators are often part of a greater system of programs and services. Recruitment was a common challenge with issues varying across locations that include difficulties in enrolling couples in the next level of services after completion of the first course in JNSF, recruitment of Hispanic couples in IHRMI, and trouble integrating women in to FFI. These challenges, along with participant suggestions and increasing experience since the start of the initiative, allowed each initiative to learn important lessons about successfully providing relationship, family,

marriage and child support education services. For example, participants prefer having both a man and woman conduct classes. Participants were also interested in alumni programs including reunions and additional relationship classes. All sites experienced recruitment challenges and developed strategies to improve.

The overarching lesson from this group of grantees is that even with a solid foundation, or an existing partnership or program to build from, and entrée into the target community, providing marriage education, child support and relationship enhancement services to low-income communities is challenging. The feedback each grantee has received from its clients is positive, and each is confident that it is improving the stability of its families. Grant management challenges including the major issue of program sustainability rival challenges with recruiting and retaining participants. The critical understanding that grantees have of their target populations and the small-scale early implementation have improved the match between participant interests and programming offered. The grantees are now preparing for new challenges, whether expanding their pool of facilitators, offering services at a new WIC Center, or establishing education programs in private industry to broaden the case for healthy relationships in the community.

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<sup>i</sup><http://www.coj.net/Departments/Childrens+Commission/Parents+and+Caregivers/JNSF/default.htm>

<sup>ii</sup><http://www.coj.net/Departments/Childrens+Commission/Parent s+and+Caregivers/JNSF/Mission.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> For this report, these initial 400 participants are not counted in the number of participants served.

<sup>iv</sup><http://www.religionandsocialpolicy.org/news/article.cfm?id=2713>