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**FINAL REPORT:**

**PHILADELPHIA HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK  
FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

**FEBRUARY 2008**

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**PREPARED BY:  
THE OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME RESOURCE CENTER**

**WITH SUPPORT FROM:  
THE WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION**

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*Overview<sup>1</sup>*

During the fall of 2007, The Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND) sponsored two Peer Networking Meetings and one workshop for staff working in service learning in higher education. The meeting and workshop facilitator distributed surveys at the end of each meeting and workshop for participants to provide feedback on their experiences. The Peer Networking Meeting and Workshop Surveys were created by the Out-of-School Time Resource Center at the University of Pennsylvania. The surveys are designed to measure the following professional development indicators using a five-point Likert scale:

- Satisfaction
- Acquisition of new knowledge and skills
- Level of knowledge
- Level of belief in the importance of topic
- Institutional support and integration
- Application
- Extension/modification

In addition, the surveys also provide the participants an opportunity to assess the presenter.

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**Peer Networking Meetings**

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PHENND Peer Networking Meetings were held on September 25, 2007 and November 12, 2007. September's theme was "**Building Capacity for Partnership**," and November's meeting focused on "**Service Learning Syllabus and Course Design**." Surveys were distributed following each networking meeting. Seven participants completed surveys for the September meeting and five participants completed surveys for the November meeting. The survey results from the two networking meetings are presented below.

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**Demographics**

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Most workshop participants were female, Caucasian, and held a Master's degree (Table 1). At the September meeting, participants' ages ranged from 22 to 61 with an average age of 38. Only three participants reported their age at the November meeting, and ages ranged from 27 to 61. The participants' years of experience working in youth programming varies tremendously from 1 – 5 years to 21 or more years. Further, the data indicate that all of the participants work with college

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<sup>1</sup> The statistics represented in this report do not include missing responses.

youth and therefore have adequate opportunities to apply lessons learned at the networking meetings.

**Table 1: Demographics**

| <b>Characteristic</b>            | <b>September<br/>(N=7)</b> | <b>November<br/>(N=5)</b> |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Female                           | 74%                        | 75%                       |
| Male                             | 29%                        | 25%                       |
| <hr/>                            |                            |                           |
| Black or African American        | 0%                         | 0%                        |
| White or Caucasian               | 100%                       | 75%                       |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0%                         | 25%                       |
| <hr/>                            |                            |                           |
| Bachelors Degree                 | 14%                        | 0%                        |
| Masters Degree                   | 72%                        | 50%                       |
| Doctorate                        | 14%                        | 25%                       |
| Other <sup>2</sup>               | 0%                         | 25%                       |

### **Satisfaction and Workshop Content**

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The data indicate that participants were quite satisfied with the both meetings and that the meetings met their expectations. Participants felt that the September meeting provided more time to troubleshoot specific problems compared to the November meeting. In addition, participants found the panel presentation at the September meeting more helpful than the presentation at the November meeting. Participants at the September meeting more favorably reported that they plan to apply the knowledge/skill from the meeting in their work with youth compared to the participants at the November meeting (4.3 and 3.0 respectively). Table 3 provides the mean scores for each of the survey questions.

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<sup>2</sup> Other not specified.

**Table 2: Mean Scores of Participants' Responses to Survey Questions**

| Survey Question  | September | November |
|--|-----------|----------|
|  | Mean      |          |
| I was satisfied with the networking opportunities at this meeting.                                     | 4.4       | 4.6      |
| This meeting was interactive.  | 4.4       | 5.0      |
| This meeting met my expectations.  | 4.2       | 4.8      |
| I learned new knowledge or skills at this meeting.   | 4.1       | 4.0      |
| This meeting gave the opportunity to practice using the new knowledge or skills.                       | 3.4       | 3.0      |
| This meeting provided an opportunity to share my successes and challenges with others.                 | 4.3       | 4.2      |
| The resource sharing at this meeting was helpful.  | 4.7       | 4.4      |
| This meeting provided time to troubleshoot specific problems.  | 4.6       | 3.6      |
| I plan to apply the knowledge/skill from this meeting in my work with youth.                           | 4.3       | 3.0      |
| I plan to share the knowledge/skill from this meeting with my colleagues.                              | 4.6       | 4.2      |
| I plan to adapt the knowledge/skill from this meeting to other programs.                               | 4.6       | 3.8      |
| I think that the youth in my program(s) will benefit from the knowledge/skill learned in this meeting. | 3.9       | 3.0      |
| The panel presentation was helpful.  | 4.0       | 3.0      |
| The informal networking was helpful.   | 4.6       | 4.8      |
| This meeting was more helpful than a formal workshop.  | 4.3       | 4.0      |

### **Knowledge and Belief in the Importance of This Topic**

In order to measure the network meetings' overall impact, participants were asked to rate their level of knowledge and belief before and after having completed the workshop. Participants were asked to rate these levels on a scale of 1-5, with five being the highest. At the September meeting, participants' level of knowledge of **Building Capacity for Partnerships** showed a respectable increase—from a mean score of 3.3 before attending the workshop to a score of 3.9 after attending the meeting. Levels of belief showed a negligible increase—4.3 to 4.4. Participants reported no change in their knowledge or level of belief at the November meeting.

**Table 3: Comparison of Mean Knowledge & Belief Scores by Meeting**

|                  | Knowledge |       | Belief |       |
|------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
|                  | Before    | After | Before | After |
| <b>September</b> | 3.3       | 3.9   | 4.3    | 4.4   |
| <b>November</b>  | 3.8       | 3.8   | 4.3    | 4.3   |

Participants attended the meeting for a variety of reasons—to share their experiences, to learn new knowledge/skills and to network with other staff. Additionally, several people reported that a colleague or supervisor had recommended attending the meeting. Table 4 provides details on participants’ reasons for attending the meetings.

**Table 4: Participants’ Reasons for Attending**

| Reason for Attending   | September<br>(N=7)          | November<br>(N=5) |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
|  | Percent Who Responded “Yes” |                   |
| I had a positive experience at a previous peer networking meeting. | 43%                         | 0%                |
| I wanted to share my experiences.                                  | 29%                         | 60%               |
| I was required to attend.  | 43%                         | 40%               |
| The meeting topic interested me.                                   | 29%                         | 40%               |
| It was recommended by a colleague/supervisor.                      | 86%                         | 20%               |
| I wanted to learn new knowledge/skills.                            | 43%                         | 60%               |
| I wanted to network with other staff.                              | 71%                         | 80%               |

## Participant Comments

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Participants were invited to provide qualitative feedback on the networking meeting. Three participants from the September meeting offered the following:

- “Excellent programming.”
- “Good topic and meeting.”
- “Would have liked more time to interact with other attendees.”

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## Workshop Evaluation

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In addition to the Peer Networking Meeting held on November 12, 2007, PHENND also hosted a separate workshop on **Service Learning Syllabus and Course Design**. Seven participants attended the workshop and completed workshop evaluations. A majority of the workshop participants identified themselves as Caucasian females with a Masters degree. The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 64 (two participants did not report their ages). Participants' years experience working with youth programs also varied with one individual having less than one year of experience and another having more than twenty-one years of experience. Table 5 details the demographics of the workshop participants.

**Table 5: Demographic Characteristics**

| <b>Characteristic</b>            | <b>November<br/>(N=7)</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Female                           | 74%                       |
| Male                             | 29%                       |
| <hr/>                            |                           |
| Black or African American        | 0%                        |
| White or Caucasian               | 100%                      |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 0%                        |
| <hr/>                            |                           |
| Masters Degree                   | 86%                       |
| Doctorate                        | 14%                       |

## Satisfaction and Workshop Content

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Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the workshop and evaluate the content of the workshop as well as the presenter. The data were measured on a rating scale of one to five, with five being the highest.

Overall, participants were quite satisfied with the workshop and its content. All of the participants 'strongly agreed' that the workshop was interactive. In addition, nearly all of the participants strongly agreed that the workshop met their expectations. However, slightly lower ratings were rendered when participants were asked to assess whether or not the workshop

provided opportunities to practice their new knowledge or skills. Although a mark of 3.0 is by no means shocking, it is noticeably lower than other categories.

The presenter scored remarkably well in all categories. Generally speaking, the presenter was seen as an expert with a refined skill set used to clearly and effectively communicate information. In addition, all of the participants 'strongly agreed' that the presenter maintained a respectful environment.

Though the participants rated their satisfaction quite high with the workshop, slightly lower marks were reported when asked if they plan to apply the information learned (3.7) and if they will be held accountable to implement the knowledge/skill (3.7). A score of 3.7 is noticeably lower when compared to the other questions and warrants highlighting in this report. Table 6 illustrates the mean scores for each survey question.

**Table 6: Mean Scores of Participants' Responses to Survey Questions**

| <b>Survey Question</b>  | <b>Mean</b> |
|---|-------------|
| I was satisfied with this workshop.   | 4.6         |
| This workshop was interactive.  | 5.0         |
| This workshop met my expectations.  | 4.9         |
| The workshop content was relevant to me.  | 4.9         |
| This workshop provided me with new knowledge or skills.   | 4.6         |
| This workshop gave me the opportunity to practice using new knowledge or skills.                            | 3.0         |
| The presenter clearly stated the overall goals of the workshop.   | 4.7         |
| The presenter clearly exhibited expertise in this topic area.   | 4.6         |
| The presenter was well-prepared and organized.  | 4.7         |
| The presenter maintained a respectful environment, one in which I felt safe to share opinions and to learn. | 5.0         |
| The presenter provided some form of follow up assistance.   | 4.4         |
| I plan to apply the knowledge or skills from this workshop in my work with youth.                           | 3.7         |
| I plan to share the knowledge or skills from this workshop with my colleagues.                              | 5.0         |
| I will be held accountable to implement the knowledge or skills learned in this workshop.                   | 3.7         |
| My organization will support me in implementing the knowledge or skills from the workshop.                  | 4.3         |
| My colleagues will support me in implementing the knowledge/skill from this workshop.                       | 4.1         |
| I think that the youth in my program(s) will benefit from the knowledge/skill learned at this workshop.     | 3.5         |
| I plan to adapt the knowledge/skill from this workshop to other programs.                                   | 4.0         |

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### Knowledge and Belief in the Importance of This Topic

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Participants' knowledge increased slightly from a mean score of 3.7 before the workshop to 4.0 after attending the workshop. Participants reported no change in their level of belief of the workshop topic.

**Table 7: Mean Knowledge & Belief Scores**

|                          | Knowledge |       | Belief |       |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------|--------|-------|
|                          | Before    | After | Before | After |
| <b>November Workshop</b> | 3.7       | 4.0   | 4.0    | 4.0   |

No qualitative feedback was provided on the workshop evaluations.

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### Conclusions

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Overall, participants found the content of the networking meetings and workshop relevant and practical. The data indicate that the networking meetings and the November workshop were positive learning experiences for participants. All of the participants said they would recommend the networking meetings and workshop they attended to a colleague.

In terms of how participants plan to use any new information, the data show that most individuals who attended the November networking meeting and workshop are less likely to apply the new knowledge/skill in their work and/or community compared to participants who attended the September networking meeting.

The participants provided high marks for the presenter's expertise and organization of the networking meetings and workshop. In sum, the data show that the participants were especially satisfied with the professional development workshop and no alarming negative data were present within this evaluation.

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### Recommendations

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In the future, it may be helpful to consider the following recommendations based on the OSTRC's research on promising practices in professional development networking meetings and workshops:

**Continue to include interactive activities.** As shown in these evaluations, participants provided high marks for the level of interaction at the networking meeting and the workshop. Previous OSTRC research shows that in general, participants reported greater satisfaction when the professional development opportunity included interactive elements (e.g., small group discussions, physical activity). In addition, the research shows that participants are more likely to apply new information when interactive activities were included in the workshop.

**Provide opportunities to practice.** When participants have time to practice the knowledge/skill, they reported a greater likelihood to apply, share and adapt the knowledge/skill from the workshop. By including opportunities for participants to “teach” one another during the training session, the likelihood for future program application increases.

**Present concrete strategies for program application.** Provide concrete strategies for participants to share the new information with colleagues and to adapt the information to their programs. Providing explicit strategies will further enhance participants’ likelihood to apply information in their programs.

**Integrate accountability mechanisms.** Participants attending the PHENND networking meetings and workshop typically reported lower marks when asked if they will be held accountable to implement the knowledge/skill. Incorporating a system of accountability can further increase participants’ actual implementation of the knowledge/skill in their programs.