

INTRODUCTION

A. Background and History

The Friendship House Association is a non-profit, multi-service agency dedicated to strengthening at-risk communities by helping inner-city residents improve academic, familial, and vocational skills. It is one of the oldest community-based social service organizations in Washington DC, having been established in 1904 and modeled after the pioneering efforts of Chicago's Hull House. The efforts of Friendship House have provided opportunities to needy families in and around the nation's capital for nearly a century, particularly through services targeting child development, family counseling and community service. In 1996, Friendship House created several task forces of local educators, community leaders, and citizens who helped identify new directions for service for needy families. As the 21st century was fast approaching, particular interest was directed to identifying ways to revitalize Friendship House and reconnect to the original mission of influencing community development in DC through economical and vocational advancement. Task force collaboration resulted in a long-term commitment to developing entrepreneurial skills and increasing employability among low-income adults while improving educational outcomes in at-risk children and adolescents. These initiatives were identified as critical links to preserving and strengthening communities weakened by racial and economical disparities.

Targeting educational and cultural development among children and youth at risk for poor academic performance was the first achievement under the new provisions outlined by task force collaborations and led to a highly successful partnership with Edison Schools, Inc. The DC Kids program began in 1997 as a means through which to provide extended, after-school learning opportunities to elementary-aged children and to address growing social concerns and issues associated with poverty and stress. The success of this program led to a partnership between Friendship House and Edison Schools, Inc. who together formed the Friendship Public Charter School (FPCS) system, the largest such charter system in the nation. With two elementary campuses and a middle school campus immediately formed, with a high school campus in development, FPCS quickly became a dominant resource in low-income communities and a viable alternative to the failing public school system in DC. Although officially separate entities, Friendship House staff envisioned a rich environment in which FPCS could help promote and support its mission and vision. Specifically, establishment of the FPCS would foster a strong academic context in which a sense of pride and empowerment in families could be nurtured to help promote safer, productive communities. At the same time, FPCS would provide a venue through which Friendship House could funnel its community-based programs, support resources, and opportunities to students of all ages, their parents, and community members at large.

Opportunities to strengthen the partnership between Friendship House and Edison Schools, Inc. and to exercise the vision of increased community development were provided by way of the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant, which was awarded to the FPCS system in 1999. The 21st Century Community Learning Center (CLC) program is a seminal

component of the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001 and was designed to achieve three goals: 1) provide opportunities for academic enrichment to students in low-performing schools and communities during non-school hours, 2) complement current academic curricula with additional programming in music and the arts, technology, education and character development, and 3) provide parents and community members at large with opportunities to develop better literacy skills and advance their educational status. In receiving this award, Friendship House and FPCS staff developed the Friendship House CLC, through which neighborhoods and communities could access to the most current, most advanced educational, technological and cultural resources so as to raise the local level of consciousness and provide opportunities for families to break the cycle of poverty.

Recent initiatives like the 21st Century CLC Program offered through the Department of Education maintain a primary focus on bringing technology in line with educational practices and curricula. Current perspectives on low-performing schools and communities suggest that teaching children and adults to appreciate technology is not enough. Rather, children and adults must be educated *through* technology, as a means through which to narrow performance gaps between high- and low-performing schools and communities and nurture students and families with sharper minds and skills. Monies attained through the 21st Century CLC grant in 1999 helped Friendship House establish quality after-school programming in FPCS elementary schools, which utilized technology and computer-based learning (e.g., Lexia literacy software) to help strengthen academic performance among participants in after-school care (see 2003 DC Kids Report). Yet while success achieved in extended learning addressed two of the three principal areas promoted by the 21st Century grant, additional monies were needed to target literacy and technology skill development in adults. To that end, FPCS petitioned for and was awarded funding in May 2000 by the Department of Education to develop the Friendship Community Technology Center (FCTC). As with 21st Century CLC programming, the FCTC project was designed to encourage development of technology and computer literacy in socially and economically depressed environments so as to close the educational, vocational, and technological divide. With a specific focus on increasing access to computers, computer-based learning, and basic education to needy neighborhoods, the FCTC would help impoverished community members eliminate social disparities and acquire job-related skills that would make them more competitive in today's job market.

Plans for the development of the FCTC were quickly drawn for implementation at the FPCS Junior Academy at Blow Pierce. The only middle school campus of the FPCS system, Blow Pierce is located in Ward 5 in the Northeast Quadrant of Washington DC, and, as with all campuses in the FPCS system, faces unique social and education circumstances that complicate efforts to provide a quality education. Based on the 2001-2002 Annual Report, Blow Pierce is home to approximately 760 students, 99% of which are African-American. The majority of students who attend Blow Pierce qualify for free and reduced lunch (81%), second only to the Chamberlain elementary campus. In addition, 13% of the Blow Pierce student body follows a Special Education Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the highest percentage among all FPCS campuses. And while trends in academic performance reveal an overall decline in the number of students performing Below Basic levels in reading and math, Blow Pierce students maintain National Percentile Rankings (NPRs) in the low 30's on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-9), making the need for quality educational and support services for students and families even

more critical. The FCTC was designed to build upon programs and curricula already implemented by Edison Schools, Inc., creating a stronger, more comprehensive network of services targeting technological and academic excellence among students and their families.

The establishment of the FPCS system, and development of projects like the FCTC, has resulted in large part out of response to the critical need for quality educational and social resources among the District's low-income children and adults. Failure rates among students enrolled in the District of Columbia Public School system (DCPS) have reached critically high levels over the last decade, while opportunities to maintain and/or enhance developing academic skills have been minimized. Opportunities for adults are no better. As it currently stands, DC services offer adult education and training and employment programs as part of its Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, but reform policies to Welfare have pushed previously qualified families out of District and federally funded programs, creating a gap in service for an increasingly large number of families in need. The purpose of this report is to highlight the implementation of the Friendship Community Technology Center (FCTC) and to document the effectiveness of the FCTC in achieving programmatic goals and objectives targeting community academic and technological advancement. A particular focus will be on the contextual elements that have mediated the program's implementation and outcomes.

B. Program Description

Friendship House support services approach learning as a life-long, dynamic process and that educational success in the formative years has a tremendous impact on success and prosperity in adulthood. As such, Friendship House incorporates a comprehensive perspective of human development into programming objectives that target all ages across the life-span and offers a wide range of services, including

- Infant and Toddler Child Care – to provide quality care to families participating in Friendship House programming through access to the Child Development Center.
- Before- and After-School/Summer Enrichment (DC Kids, DC Juniors) – to provide educational and recreational programs to students in the FPCS system and neighboring public schools.
- Youth and Adult Basic Education/GED Instruction – to provide training in basic education skills so as to increase the likelihood of job placement and retention through access to the Center for Youth Services and Adult Education Services.
- Seniors and Disabled Persons Learning Program – to provide additional social opportunities to seniors and promote volunteer and “mixed age” training programs.
- Community Learning Workshops (i.e., employment training, counseling, parenting skills)

In implementing these programs, Friendship House addresses the evolving needs of students, families and community members during school and non-school hours and provides “wrap around” services that buffer against the chronic stresses associated with poverty. Perhaps more importantly, “wrap around” services are critical for all ages because parents serve as primary teachers for their children. In order to promote successful academic, social and emotional

development in children, parents must have the educational, vocational and social skills and support the need to model effective behaviors and attitudes that promote success.

To maximize the effectiveness of “wrap around” services, Friendship House has incorporated telecommunications and technology into programming decisions. A Department of Technology and Extended Learning (DTEL) was established at Friendship House in 2001 to organize technology-based activities that would be implemented in the schools and the community. The DTEL works closely with FPCS and maintains an overriding goal to funnel technology-related activities into all support services offered through Friendship House and provide educational opportunities through technology that break the cycle of physical, mental, and emotional poverty. Technology components envisioned as part of the 21st Century CLC grant were realized through additional funding from the Department of Education’s Community Technology Center (CTC) grant. The CTC grant was designed not only to promote effective programming that would increase access to and utilization of computers and information technology, but also to eliminate the social, racial and economic disparities that have divided communities and created gaps in competencies related to technology. To achieve this goal, the DTEL envisioned a FCTC that would bolster literacy, math and job opportunities using computers and technology for the purposes of demonstrating educational effectiveness in at-risk urban and rural communities.

From the beginning, development of the FCTC was considered advantageous, given the infrastructure provided by Friendship House and the array of support services already available to the community. For example, the DC Kids after school program provides students with opportunities to increase their literacy skills through computer programming and instruction, as well as intranet communication via ‘The Commons,’ Edison’s customized information system. At the same time, the Center for Youth Services and Adult Education Services provides job-related support and instruction to Friendship House members, along with Community Learning Workshops targeting career counseling and parenting. Funds provided through the CTC grant would strengthen these existing services and provide a high-tech facility in the community for students and community members alike to access computers and target new skills development. Satellite locations would further increase availability of computers to the public, resulting in a more technologically advanced community in NE Washington DC.

The primary goal of the FCTC program is to promote academic and vocational advancement by targeting family literacy development. With after-school, evening and weekend accessibility, the FCTC was designed to accomplish four objectives, including

- I. Increasing access to and use of web-based computing and communications technology for children and adults
- II. Significantly improving individual and group literacy levels for children and adult parents, which result in increased grade levels and rates of attaining GED certification for adult learners
- III. Increasing levels of job placement retention, and promotion potential for adults
- IV. Expanding and/or creating a network of small business owners operating in the area

Increased access was to be accomplished through the establishment of a CTC in Blow Pierce Middle school, along with satellite computer facilities at Friendship House, the remaining three FPCS campuses, and the Langston Terrace Dwellings, located across the street from Blow Pierce. Yet increasing access to computers is only half the solution. For children to develop high quality skills in technology, parents must also be trained and educated on the importance of technology in today's educational practices. FCTC activities would provide a critical link between the schools and the communities in which they reside through the Home Roll-Out program, which places desktop computers in the homes of FPCS students so as to link student educational growth with family learning and support. In addition, services targeting Adult Basic Education (ABE) and GED certification would be offered at Blow Pierce and satellite locations in efforts to improve literacy skills and promote better educational standing, while development of the Entrepreneurship and Investment Program and Community Learning Workshops would assist adults in developing resumes, securing jobs, and cultivating an interest in small business development. As with all Friendship House services, activities related to the FCTC aim to promote academic and vocational achievement while building strong self-esteem, creativity, civic-mindedness, and leadership. This emphasis on cognitive, social and community development reflects the awareness of the need for comprehensive, integrated services that provide children and adults with the leverage they need to achieve a better quality of life.

C. Organizational Structure

Friendship House is located on D Street SE and serves families in Wards 2 and 7 of the District of Columbia. It is housed in *the Maples*, an historic landmark on Capitol Hill, where staff offices, the early childhood center, and space for social service programs are located. Due to rapid growth and expansion in recent years, several offices have been moved to neighboring buildings. This expansion is largely the result of the vision and tireless advocacy efforts of current President and CEO, Donald L. Hense. Mr. Hense served as a Friendship House Board Member for 26 years and has served as CEO for the past seven years. During his tenure, he has galvanized staff, community members, and local and national policy makers and politicians with his vision of equitable environments that maximize individual potential and strengthen communities by leveling endemic social barriers. Most notable among accomplishments that support this vision is the development of the *Community School Model*, which has been operationalized through the establishment of Friendship Public Charter Schools, Inc. and its subsequent partnership with the Edison Project.

This partnership with Edison Schools, Inc. provides programming and curriculum to be used in the Friendship Public Charter Schools. Founded in 1992, Edison partners with school districts and charter boards to raise student achievement through its research-based school design, aligned assessment systems, interactive professional development, integrated use of technology and other proven program features. Edison Schools currently serves more than 110,000 public school students in over 20 states through four different business channels: (1) the management of schools for school districts, (2) charter schools, (3) summer and after-school programs, and (4) achievement management solutions for school systems.

Edison's organizational model is based on the following principles that form the basis of their educational curriculum and instruction:

- a clear and ambitious sense of *Purpose*
- strong academic *Leadership*
- *Inclusion* of the entire staff
- clear *Expectations* for teachers and ongoing professional development
- encouragement of *Teamwork* and a collective *Commitment* to excellence
- principles and practices of *Accountability*
- a school *Community* that allows teachers and administrators to know all students as individuals

A graphic representation of the organizational structure (*See Appendix A- Organizational Chart*) illustrates the overarching partnership between the two organizations and the overlap between Friendship House programs and the FPCS sites. As seen in the chart, many of the supplemental and enhancement programs are funneled through Friendship House to the schools and are managed through the expanded role of the Department of Technology and Extended Learning (DTEL).

However, as stated earlier, success in implementation of the FCTC program, and in achieving targeted goals and objectives is contingent upon partnership and support from organizations outside of the Friendship-Edison alliance. To that end, public housing organizations were considered as possible support sites for the FCTC, as a way to increase community access to computers and services targeting academic and vocational training and bring programming to those in need. Langston Terrace Dwellings was invited to participate in the FCTC project, in part because of its proximity to Blow Pierce (right across the street) and in part because of its history in and contribution to the District. Langston Terrace is named after John Mercer Langston, the first African-American to be elected to Congress. A key player in reconstruction efforts after the Civil War, Langston was also a founder of the Howard University School of Law. Langston Terrace was completed in 1938 by highly recognized architect Robert Hilyard, while the grounds were developed by the first certified African-American landscaper, Dave Augustus Williston. Urban development initiatives at Langston Terrace are currently supported by the Langston Dwellings Resident Council Office, a 501 c3 organization dedicated to empowering residents through programs and services that revitalize the site and while providing life building skills and education. Programs offered through the Resident Council Office target residents of all ages and include a landscaping gardening program, an educational center, a legal secretary certification program, a community center, and a computer lab.

METHODS

Plans for the evaluation of the Friendship Community Technology Center (FCTC) project were initially developed with the Academy for Educational Development (AED). However, professional and programmatic differences between FPCS and AED staff led to discussion and formation of the current evaluation. Efforts under the current evaluation plan helped FCTC leadership staff clearly define project goals and objectives and provided concrete methods for collecting qualitative and quantitative data that would document the evolution of project outcomes and highlight overall project implementation and impact. However, unexpected challenges to implementation and execution of the evaluation plan made it difficult to construct a comprehensive, quantitative assessment of the program. Modifications to the plan and the resulting evaluation approach used for the current project are described below.

A. Evaluation Design

After negotiations with AED failed to produce an evaluation plan that satisfied the needs of FCTC leadership staff, a new approach was considered. FCTC leadership staff met and contracted with the current evaluation team and constructed a plan that would describe program implementation, the effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives, and the impact of the project on youth and adult participants. Both qualitative and quantitative data methodologies were proposed, as were plans to provide technical assistance on database development and reporting, as needed and desired by FCTC leadership staff. Specifically, the evaluation team planned to conduct routine meetings with FCTC program staff, stakeholder interviews with leadership staff, and observations of program activities that would qualitatively inform program implementation and the successes and challenges met over the course of the project. At the same time, baseline and follow-up data collection on literacy rates, GED completion, student attendance at school, adult employment trends, and small business development would quantitatively inform rates of change on targeted goals and objectives over the course of the project. Collection of FCTC staff and participant satisfaction surveys would further outline the success of the program and the extent to which FCTC programming made a direct impact on community attitude and motivation (*see Appendix B – Evaluation Plan*).

While mutually agreed upon by both the evaluation team and FCTC leadership staff as a quality evaluation plan, initial tasks were postponed due to delays in signing the evaluation contract. Challenges inherent to projects involving many partners and players (i.e., scheduling conflicts, limited time for meetings) made it difficult to finalize the plans for the evaluation, thereby making it impossible for the evaluation team to conduct early observations of FCTC activities and collect baseline data. At the same time, continual changes to FCTC programming (i.e., changes in course offerings, curricula and venue) required multiple modifications to the proposed evaluation, creating a rather unique dilemma for the evaluation team. Ultimately, the evaluation plan was modified four times and only officially contracted during Year III of the project. Collection of baseline data by the evaluation team was no longer an option.

Rather than miss out on an opportunity for project assessment, however, the evaluation team resigned to rely on data collection procedures employed by FCTC program staff and efforts were redirected to assist them in any way possible. To facilitate FCTC program staff and their efforts, the evaluation team drafted course evaluation forms that would reflect community participation and provide feedback on perceived effectiveness of FCTC services in meeting targeted goals and objectives. At the same time, FCTC program staff members were believed to be tracking participant enrollment and attendance as part of their reporting obligations to FCTC leadership staff. Ongoing meetings with FCTC leadership staff were based on such assumptions and were used as the venue in which to discuss project tasks and timelines for data collection and analysis.

During Year III, it became clear that extensive changes to course setting, scheduling and content that occurred over the course of the project had impacted data tracking and collection. Specifically, FCTC program staff had a difficult time tracking participant enrollment, attendance, and outcomes on educational and vocational skill building because of time, space and participant limitations. During Year II of the project, course scheduling and venue was modified considerably, making it increasingly difficult for FCTC program staff to track attendance rates among repeat participants. At the same time, FCTC program staff redesigned courses to be more individualized and self-paced in structure, in response to participant interests and skill limitations, thereby making performance outcomes and course evaluations difficult to streamline. In the end, participant enrollment, attendance and outcome data was collected intermittently on adult participants and little to none on youth participants. Moreover, course evaluations were never distributed. Such obstacles made a comprehensive assessment of achievement on targeted goals and objectives more difficult to mount.

At the same time, consistent provision of direct, front-line service on the part of FCTC program staff provided for sound insight and perspective on successes and challenges to program implementation. In their own right, staff and stakeholder interviews serve as a legitimate form of *formative evaluation*, which provides detailed accounts of service delivery, and provides a rich context for understanding the challenges that come with working with at-risk communities. While quantitative data was in shorter supply than originally hoped, qualitative data was considerable and served as a critical aid in the reconstruction of program implementation over the course of the project.

B. Procedure

Given the challenges outlined above, the evaluation ultimately focused on program implementation, mediating factors, and the impact of FCTC programming on gains in adult academic and vocational performance as viewed by FCTC program staff. Documentation of program activities and the collection of qualitative and quantitative information on the utilization of FCTC-related programs and services served as the basis for staff and stakeholder interviews. Quantitative data was analyzed when available and used to reflect on progress achieved on project goals and objectives.

Through this report, evaluation tasks serve both the 1) *formative function*, providing feedback to the program about how services were being delivered and 2) the *comparative function*, in which program methods, services, dosage, and other mediating influences are compared with intermediate outcomes to assess the program's effect on adult participants. Process evaluation methods, some of which are based in ethnographic research, document the evolution of the program, implementation procedures and were used to provide feedback to administrators to affect program refinements.

Evaluation Tasks

In order to provide as comprehensive an evaluation and assessment of the FCTC program as possible, the evaluation team engaged in various assessment activities. Listed here are types of tasks used during the evaluation to inform program implementation and outcomes. Tasks fell under four headings, including

I. Program Support- tasks included meetings and conference calls; refinements of program objectives, indicators, and measurement tools; and the development of a final evaluation plan. Such tasks were executed over the course of the evaluation in order to continually inform program staff of the evolution of program implementation and learn from program staff of new and/or existing successes and challenges.

II. Process Evaluation- tasks included formal and informal interviews; collection of dosage data, when available; and collection of qualitative data on programs. Process evaluation tasks were initiated in Fall 2002 when revisions to the FCTC logic model and targeted goals and objectives were finalized. A Course Evaluation Form for use with adults and youth who participated in the FCTC program was also developed in Fall 2002, but were never distributed by staff. In spring 2003, evaluators surveyed current FCTC facilitators to ascertain their perceptions of strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and suggestions for improvement for the FCTC program.

*III. Outcome Evaluation-*tasks included collection of data on intermediate outcomes using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Due to considerable delay in finalizing evaluation contracts and plans, comprehensive data on dosage, attendance, and outcomes across all three years of the project was not collected.

IV. Reporting- reporting tasks, though few, varied in their content. Primary documentation included a Year II Preliminary Evaluation Report and the Final Evaluation Report.

C. Goals and Objectives

The primary objective of the FCTC program was designed to support the vision of the Community Technology Center Initiative sponsored by the Department of Education, which is to empower at-risk children, families and communities through academic, vocational and technological opportunities. Specific goals of the FCTC program are to improve access to technology, increase employability of community residents, and increase employment opportunities in the community, in part by building stronger connections between Friendship-Edison schools, Friendship House, and the communities in which they thrive. As part of the evaluation plan, a logic model was developed in order to clearly link program components and activities to anticipated intermediate and long-term outcomes, as well as detailed outputs which could serve as indicators of program implementation (*see Appendix C - FCTC Logic Model*). Discrete objectives over the course of the program target activities for youth and adults across multiple domains (academic, social/behavioral) and include:

Goal 1a: Reduce gap in access to computer technologies

- Increased access to web-based and communications technologies

Goal 1b: Increase employability

- Improved individual and group literacy levels
- Increased grade level promotion of students
- Increased GED attainments for adult learners

Goal 1c: Increase employment opportunities in community

- Increased levels of job placement, retention, and promotion for adults
- Create/expand network of small businesses in community

D. Data Sources and Types

A brief description of the two independent data sources and specific measures used in this project are as follows:

- 1) *Service provider notes and records*: In accordance with professional standards and ethics, project staff collected and maintained reports, records, and notes of contacts and services provided to students and adult participants in the course of service provision (i.e., attendance records, demographic data)
- 2) *Interviews/Questionnaires*: Evaluation staff conducted interviews with key stakeholders and FCTC program and leadership staff in order to gather supportive documentation regarding program implementation and capture perspectives of program success and vision.

RESULTS

The historical and organizational overview provided in the Introduction keenly illustrates the need of Friendship Public Charter Schools to establish successful, comprehensive collaborations among local organizations in order to strengthen community life and development. Although faced with many challenges, the partnerships developed produced many accomplishments over the course of the project. Specifically, FPCS staff established a viable CTC at the Friendship-Edison Blow Pierce Middle School; linked technology-based activities and programming to the DC Juniors after-school program; expanded existing adult basic education and technology classes into the schools and community; constructed a small business/entrepreneurial program for local residents; and expanded the successful GED ‘Fast Track’ program for adult high school dropouts.

The specific successes and challenges of the FCTC program are detailed in the following sections. The Process Evaluation section generally describes the design and implementation of the FCTC program over the course of the grant; the staff and their perceptions of the program; and some of the contextual elements that have mediated the program’s implementation and success. The Outcome Evaluation section summarizes findings related to achievement of stated goals and objectives, as identified by dosage and service utilization. Finally, an interpretation and summary of the findings is followed by recommendations for continuing improvement.

A. Process Evaluation

Friendship-Edison CTC Curriculum Components

The Friendship Community Technology Center (FCTC) provides access to and skills-training in recreational and educational technology in and around the Southeast Ward of Washington DC. The purpose of the FCTC is two-fold: 1) to build on and expand the capacity of programs already offered through Friendship House while 2) targeting improved literacy, education and job placement among the community’s higher-risk residents through technology training and skills development. Existing programs offered through Friendship House include adult basic education (ABE) and computer literacy classes, after-school programming (DC Kids), community workshops targeting parenting, and job skills. In securing funds for the FCTC, staff with the Department of Technology and Extended Learning (DTEL) have been able to create a direct, interactive technology center at Blow Pierce Academy and expand ABE and computer literacy programming to primary satellite locations in the community. Funds have also increased time and availability of such programming to evenings and weekends and have provided computer training to the parents of students attending FPCS schools. In addition, DTEL staff have expanded after-school services to students attending Blow Pierce Middle School through the DC Juniors program, while a partnership with Robin Hood Consulting has transformed pre-existing job skills training services into a more extensive, comprehensive course

offering. All services and programs offered through the Friendship-Edison CTC were designed to target literacy and educational advancement.

Through expansion and/or development of technology-based programs, the FCTC program has been able to provide services to individuals of all ages and all levels of academic and vocational competency. A brief description of each FCTC program component is included below.

- **DC Juniors** After-School Enrichment – an extension of the highly successful elementary after-school program DC Kids, **DC Juniors** provides resources to middle school students that encourage artistic and innovative use of media for community, educational, promotional and personal use. Participation is designed to help children build lasting connections with their community and foster opportunities for self-expression, creativity and skill development. Three specific technology-driven programs were created for use with middle schools students, including
 1. The Broadcasters – a program that offers students access to video production for the purposes of creating historical, promotional videos about Friendship House and Langston Terrace Residential Housing. As the FCTC is housed in Blow Pierce Middle School, students participating in The Broadcasters have access to state-of-the-art equipment, including a Video Flex Cam and digital cameras.
 2. Generations of Young Achievers (G.O.Y.A.) – a program that offers students the opportunity to tie language development to storytelling and technology. Students write stories in Spanish and use digital cameras and/or scanners to create movies and animations that tell their story. Training in clay animation, digital imaging, sound and video animation is also provided.
 3. Robotics and Engineering – a program that offers students training in engineering and technology literacy skills through a complete “turn-key” installation of a mobile engineering laboratory. This lab, part of the FPCS ‘Academy of Engineering’, offers digital cameras, graphic calculators, and sonic ranging devices that assist students in the development of designs and devices.
- Home Access Support– in an effort to sustain and enhance the quality in-school and after-school programming being offered on FPCS campuses, home computers are provided to all FPCS families with students in Grade 3 or above. In order to receive computers, however, families are required to attend an introductory training comprised of two sessions; one on basic operating system functions and another on practical applications for email. Both sections must be passed before computers are released to take home. The purpose of the training is to familiarize families with basic computer literacy so as to 1) encourage utilization at home and 2) increase interest and involvement in student education activities. Trainings are scheduled as needed, either over two evenings or in a single, one-day session on Saturdays in order to remain flexible to family schedules.
- Literacy – as the primary focus of the FCTC, programs are designed to target families and residents living in and around Blow Pierce and provide direct, hands-on training in

both computer and education literacy. Two specific tracks have been developed, including

1. GED 'Fast Track'/GED with Adult Basic Education– adults interested in sitting for the GED high school equivalency exam are enrolled into a 13-week course that teaches skills and strategies for successfully passing the test. Only students who present with a strong competency in reading and math at enrollment can participate in the GED 'Fast Track' course. Those adults interested in sitting for the GED but at entry possess inadequate reading and math skills are enrolled in the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, which focuses skill-building on rudimentary concepts that can build to GED completion.
 2. Computer Basics – computer classes are built around a 13-week course targeting computer basic skill development and proficiency with Microsoft Word. While the computer basics portion of the course had no pre-requisite, adults wishing to attend the Microsoft Operating Systems portion of the course so as to hone skills on specific data processing programs (e.g., Word and Excel), must first demonstrate basic proficiency in computer fundamentals before enrolling. Computer training is also provided to students at Blow Pierce both during school (i.e., Lexia training, home roll-out training) and after-school hours (i.e., Robotics and Engineering).
- o Entrepreneurship and Investment– in line with the mission of the FCTC, which is to provide comprehensive services linking technology with literacy and vocational advancement, the Entrepreneurship and Investment program helped Friendship House participants and neighborhood residents fulfill their dreams of starting their own small businesses or nonprofit organizations. Included in the 12-week course was instruction targeting basic business development and oversight (concept design, budget, marketing) for both real-world and web-world environments. Data tracking programs relevant to small business design (e.g., Excel) were also covered. A second course designed to assist with small business set-up (i.e., attainment of federal tax ID number, completion of IRS forms) was offered one time only.

To maximize student, family, and resident participation in FCTC activities, staff ensured that a variety of programming would be offered daily during AM and PM hours. **Table 1** highlights the schedule of services across the FCTC and satellite locations. So that students have full access to the variety of programs offered through DC Juniors, each program is offered at set, exclusive times during the week. Specifically, The Broadcasters is offered twice weekly on Monday and Wednesday from 4:00 – 5:00 pm, while Robotics and Engineering is available 5:00 – 6:00 pm the same days. G.O.Y.A. is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the entire session (4:00 – 6:00 pm). All DC Juniors programs are led by teachers from Blow Pierce. As literacy-based programming embodies the essence and mission of the FCTC, services are offered frequently at all age levels. In addition to DC Juniors, the GED 'Fast Track' classes are offered Monday - Thursday from 6:00 – 9:00 pm at Blow Pierce Middle School, while a GED workshop is offered Saturday mornings from 9:00 am – 12 noon. GED/ABE students attend classes at Langston Terrace Dwellings Monday – Thursday from 10:00 am – 12 noon and again on

Saturday mornings at Blow Pierce. Lastly, computer literacy programs are widely distributed throughout the neighborhood, providing home rollout training, student literacy classes and after-school enrichment at FPCS campuses during the day, computer fundamentals at Langston Terrace during the day, and computer basics and software training at the Friendship House Connect Lab at night.

Table 1. Schedule of Services – FCTC and Satellite Locations

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Course						
<i>Student Enrichment:</i>						
‘Special Edison’*						
DC Juniors*	4-6 pm	4-6 pm	4-6 pm	4-6 pm		
<i>Adult Access:</i>						
Home Roll-Out****		6-8		6-8		9-4
<i>Adult Literacy:</i>						
GED ‘Fast Track’*	6-9 pm	6-9 pm	6-9 pm	6-9 pm		9-12 noon
GED/ABE**	10-12 noon	10-12 noon	10-12 noon	10-12 noon		9-12 noon
<i>Adult Technology:</i>						
Computer Basics***	6-7pm		6-8 pm			
MS Word, Excel*** (one-one)	6-7pm		6-8 pm			
Computer Fundamentals**		10 – 11:30 am				
<i>Adult Business:</i>						
Entrepreneurship and Investment*		7 – 9 pm		7 – 9 pm		

* - Blow Pierce Community Technology Center

** - Langston Terrace Dwellings (Arthur Capp Multipurpose Center)

*** - Friendship House ‘Connect’ Computer Lab

**** - FPCS Campuses

Program Implementation

Aligned with the overall mission of Friendship House, which is to promote empowerment among high-risk families through utilization of quality family and life-skills services, the successful development and implementation of a community-based technology center required collaboration and partnership between Friendship House, Friendship Public Charter Schools and organizations offering technology- and business-related capacity and services. Early in the project, partnerships were considered with American University, the Beacon Institute for Learning and the District of Columbia’s Department of Employment Services so as to maximize technical and vocational training and support to individuals utilizing the CTC. Although

worthwhile, these partnerships were never initiated, largely because the needs and vision of staff changed as the type and availability of services to be offered through the FCTC was modified over the course of Year I. However, a wide array of partnerships was formed during Years II and III with organizations and companies providing support, supplies and/or consultation. A complete list of partners and the services or supplies they provide is included in **Table 2**.

Table 2. FCTC Partnerships and Collaborations

Organization	Service/Resource Provided
<i>Robin Hood, LLP</i>	Entrepreneurial Series
<i>Potomac Technology Empowerment Center</i>	Technical Assistant and Resources
<i>Langston Terrace Housing Community Advisory Board</i>	Collaborative Project and Community Based Resources
<i>Department of Employment Services</i>	Client Referral and Occupational Skills Training Program
<i>Friendship Public Charter School, Inc.</i>	Facility/Space
<i>Friendship House Association</i>	Instructional Support, Before and After School Programs, Adult Education/GED Preparation, Parenting Plus
<i>The Edison Project</i>	Instructional and Technical Support
<i>'PCEdventures'</i> [©]	Training/Set-up and Instructional Support for the FPCS 'Academy of Engineering'

Developing partnerships and networks aided in the conceptualization and construction of the CTC at Blow Pierce during Year I. DTEL staff spent considerable time and effort researching the equipment and services that would be necessary to achieve targeted goals and objectives. Critical to the successful construction and implementation of the FCTC was the idea that technology must be a primary component of, rather than just an accessory to, all learning opportunities. As such, early partnership with technology-based companies like N-Gen Solutions provided DTEL with consultation on FCTC design and layout, as well as electronic whiteboards and integrated audio and video systems that would aid in service provision. By February 2001, equipment had been delivered and installed at Blow Pierce, including one server and teacher workstation, 18 desktop computers with Internet access and the interactive whiteboard. Once equipment was installed, efforts then turned to identifying the best educational activities and services to be offered to FPCS students, their families, and the community at large that could incorporate state-of-the-art technology.

At the same time, efforts were directed toward building quality relationships and partnerships among FPCS and FCTC staff and stakeholders. Previous experience with school-wide implementation of service-based programs like DC Kids helped clarify the critical need for developing such relationships early in the process and the importance of establishing good communication and high levels of trust. As such, program staff and stakeholders worked to build rapport through the establishment of rules and regulations and policies and procedures that would govern the utilization and development of the FCTC. Multiple meetings were held to discuss issues surrounding security and sustaining engagement and written agreements were drafted, in which specific roles and responsibilities were delineated. While such efforts helped formulate early relationships and establish a level playing field for all invested parties, strengthening collaboration remained an ongoing, continually evolving process, particularly as partnerships with organizations resulted in simultaneous implementation of varying program components.

FCTC staff began to engage youth and adults from the community through the use of newsletters, flyers, parent-teacher meetings at the schools, parent meetings at the housing site, and follow-up phone calls. Media opportunities, including public service announcements on WHUR and an expose on I.J. Hudson's 'Digital Edge' segment on Channel 4 News also helped spread the word. With the onset of the Year II, the project intensified its engagement efforts, solidified program offerings and schedules, and began implementing classes. Open houses and surveys were provided to school families and community residents to solicit feedback on perceived needs, interests, and scheduling preferences. Youth classes and after-school programs, along with adult computer literacy classes and the small business course, were initiated and conducted on a regular basis at the FCTC at Blow Pierce.

While the initial conceptualization included daytime access to the FCTC for community residents, unforeseen and unanticipated problems resulted in considerable changes in scheduling and service provision during Year II. Specifically, the FCTC was initially designed to be an Adult Basic Education (ABE) and computer literacy site exclusively during the school day, to be a youth enrichment site after the school day, and to be an ABE site at night. However, having the FCTC occupy a classroom within Blow Pierce presented considerable obstacles. Of paramount concern was student safety and the manner in which school order would be maintained while implementing a program that would achieve target objectives and encourage access and utilization from early morning to late night. FCTC and FPCS staff brainstormed for ways to circumvent rising concerns about safety, floating suggestions for gates, additional security, and/or rerouting and forbidding student access to corridors closest to the technology center to ensure their safety. Ultimately, upon review of the initial application, a decision was made to change the original plan and divide the offerings of the Friendship-Edison Community Technology Center into three categories: 1) Center access would be offered exclusively to students through their teachers during the school day, 2) to students during after school hours (from 4 pm to 6 pm) and 3) to the adult population between the hours of 6pm to 9pm and Saturday's 9 to 12. It was hoped that such modifications would not dampen momentum or public interest in the FCTC.

Over the course of Years II and III of the project, FCTC staff regularly solicited feedback from participants and community residents so as to update course offerings. Perhaps more

importantly, FCTC staff encouraged school and community populations to identify areas of interest so that participation and attendance in programs could be increased. One such venue used to encourage participation was the Open House, which was held during the winter of 2002 and again in the spring of 2003 to link residents with available services. Of those who attended the Open Houses, 59 completed Registration Forms expressing interest in computer classes. Interestingly, 79% of interested participants were female. At the same time, the majority of those who registered at the Open House were older, with 69% being at least 36 years of age. While unable to determine how many, if any, of these individuals participated in a computer class, this data does provide an interesting profile of the type of community member (e.g., older female) who seemed most interested in, and thus could potentially most benefit from, participation in FCTC-related activities and mission. Enrollment procedures and course curricula of primary program components were tweaked as needed by teachers and program facilitators to ensure buy-in among participants and sustain interest in and willingness to participate.

While problems associated with enrollment and attendance tracking procedures were encountered, growth and expansion of original programs were noted, providing some measure of overall success in program implementation and engagement. Specifically, computer class offerings for Blow Pierce students during the day were expanded to special education students, who used *Lexia Learning* Phonemic Awareness Software to assist with language acquisition. Primary activities focus on students' ability to decode words and place them into sentences, while additional exercises address reading comprehension skills. Moreover, continued interest in and ongoing development of the Friendship House website will provide online learning simulations and opportunities to FPCS students and families (www.friendshiptech.net) and will house the online registration for all after-school programming at FPCS campuses. Other ideas being explored involving the website include adult access to programming and activities that supplement the Home Roll-Out Training, as well as student access to online tutorials and homework assistance. Finally, expanding after-school enrichment programming to Langston Terrace residents is being considered for the 2003-2004 academic year.

Program Successes and Challenges

It could easily be argued that the goals and objectives set forth for the FCTC were extensive and ambitious. Specifically, the project was designed to track improvements in family and individual literacy, increased GED attainment and job placement, and development of 25 new businesses, all while utilizing technology and technology-based programming. The FCTC met with unmitigated success on several levels, most notably in building relationships with community residents and participants. At the same time, challenges with data collection impacted the full assessment of program implementation. The following section explores the successes and challenges faced by FCTC staff (*see Appendix D – Staff Tenure*) in their pursuit to implement, execute and collect data on program components.

I. Computer Basics/Fundamentals, MS Word

The Computer Basics class is a 13-week course consisting of two modules: basic computer literacy for five weeks and Microsoft Word 2000 training for eight weeks. The

computer literacy module focuses largely on increasing participant awareness of and confidence in using computers, including computer hardware, the keyboard, and the Windows 98 and 2000 operating systems, while the Microsoft Word 2000 module guides participants through beginning and intermediate concepts related to word processing. As this class is considered a core program element for the FCTC, efforts to maximize enrollment are prioritized. As such, participants do not need to meet any prerequisites before registering for this course, nor are they required to demonstrate any pre-existing level of proficiency prior to enrollment. A course syllabus is provided to all students, in which major tasks and goals for the course are outlined (*see Appendices E and F - Computer Basics and Microsoft Word Course Syllabi*). Upon completion of the course, participants are expected to demonstrate fundamental computer concepts and terminology. Classes include some lecture, along with demonstration and hands-on exercises. Coursework is developed by the instructor to yield maximum benefit to all participants. The Computer Fundamentals class offered at Langston Terrace is similar to the Computer Basics course, but focuses exclusively on computer hardware training and is only 8 weeks in length.

Unquestionably, the biggest success of the Computer Basics program was the demonstrated ability and willingness of staff to remain unwaveringly flexible in scheduling and instruction. The program maintained viability over the course of the three-year project, which is considerable, given the range of diversity in participant interest, ability, and background, along with unanticipated changes in program venue. Indeed, in interviews conducted with program facilitators, flexibility was identified as the key to success in programs designed to reach broad numbers of high-risk, urban community residents. In increasing access, programs and services were “taken to the public” in a show that demonstrated commitment to and interest in community well-being. At the same time, continuous modifications to instruction (e.g., moving from structured, group-based programming to individualized, self-paced programming) provided the quickest means through which to empower participants and build confidence and self-esteem, which are critical components to both personal and professional achievement. Although course evaluations were never distributed, program facilitators report great confidence in the success of the program, as demonstrated by continued enrollment and distribution of ‘Certificates of Completion’ that participants were encouraged to provide to employees or simply use as a symbol of accomplishment.

That these successes were achieved in the face of considerable change in scheduling and course format speaks well of staff skills and capabilities. Initial problems with program implementation focused on location and availability of classes. Computer Basics was initially offered at the FCTC at Blow Pierce, but once adult classes were no longer available during the day due to space and scheduling limitations, facilitators had to scramble to secure space at satellite locations. According to interviews with program facilitators, such changes impacted participant enrollment and participation as well as the manner in which the course was taught. Computer basics classes were moved to the Friendship House ‘Connect’ Lab on Mondays and Wednesday nights and to Langston Terrace Dwellings on Tuesday mornings. On the positive side, increased access likely made it easier for participants to find a time and location that best suited their needs. However, such dispersion also made it difficult to maintain high enrollment numbers, as the Friendship House ‘Connect’ Lab only houses five computers. Participant numbers dwindled during the last part of Year II and never fully recovered due to these space

constraints. The overall approach to course instruction changed as well. Initially, the Computer Basics course was a structured, instruction-driven class, supported by demonstrations and interactive exercises. Participants who did not complete the computer literacy portion were encouraged to complete a Participant Interview form in order to ensure basic understanding of and proficiency in computer use before taking part in instruction on MS Word. However, with changes in venue came increasingly diversified levels of proficiency, changing the focus of the course from instruction-based to self-paced learning and thereby eliminating the need for any pre-requisite understanding of computers. Participants were able to enroll for any or all of the Computer Basics course and learn at an individualized pace. Demonstrations and interactive exercises became the dominant form of instruction.

Modifications to program implementation were also driven by challenges related to participant ability. A self-paced approach became the most appropriate form of instruction when it became apparent that participants' perceived familiarity and ability with computers did not always equal proficiency. In completing a Participant Interview form as part of enrollment, participants provided program facilitators with information regarding past experience with computers, along with previous utilization of computer hardware and software. The majority of participants reported moderate to high levels of comfort and exposure to previous computer use, but actual performance in the course suggested otherwise. According to interviews with facilitators, many participants' "familiarity" with computers extended only so far as visual identification of computer hardware, while for other participants, "proficiency" was based on outdated versions of software. Such discrepancies made it increasingly difficult to use a uniform, structured approach to instruction. Self-paced instruction allowed participants to move at a pace truly tailored to their needs and abilities, but it limited staff ability to document the quality of the course curriculum.

By Year III, the self-paced approach morphed again to a self-paced, drop-in course in response to participants' personal backgrounds, specifically their history with public assistance and their perspectives toward social service. The majority of participants who enrolled in FCTC programs were TANF recipients (Temporary Aid to Needy Families). TANF is a public assistance program that was created as part of recent welfare reform and is designed to provide short-term assistance to welfare recipients as they attain necessary skills that will transition them back into the world of work. As an official TANF vendor, recipients are referred to Friendship House from the DC Department of Human Services' (DHS) Income Maintenance Administration for employment-related services. Recipients are required to participate in Friendship House services in order to receive aid and work with case managers to ensure compliance with pre-determined requirements for aid (e.g., enrolled in appropriate programs, meeting minimum requirement for number of hours of participation). Length of participation in Friendship House programs depends on the type of program in which recipients are enrolled and can run from four to six weeks to three to four months. At the same time, individuals on TANF are encouraged to secure gainful employment as soon as possible, which may impact the level of involvement and/or commitment they make to FCTC programs, making the drop-in format a more pragmatic choice for the Computer Basics course. Chronic exposure to stresses associated with poverty can also impact participation, as they often times creates adaptive, if not altogether functional behaviors and attitudes toward work and work-related services. Transience is a common problem, and participants enrolled in public assistance programs are often weary, even fearful, of

programs and services that rely on performance as an index of success and achievement. In a sense, low self-efficacy proved to be the primary obstacle to achieving significant change at both the program and the personal level. The self-paced, drop-in format allowed participants greater control over the learning environment, likely creating a more conducive, even safe atmosphere in which to participate.

II. GED/ABE

The GED program is offered three times a week for thirteen weeks, including Saturdays, to prepare FCTC students for the District of Columbia High School equivalency exam. Upon enrollment, participants are asked to complete a Learner Intake form, which identifies basic demographic information and tracks reading and math competencies at program entry. Participants then complete a week-long orientation and are assigned a book for use during the course. Instruction is at both the group and individual level and is intermingled with extracurricular activities like trips to New York and local book fairs to balance work with pleasure. Fees for the GED test is covered by the FCTC and light snacks are provided for participants. Through instruction, activities and drills, participants are taught strategies and techniques that increase their chances of passing the exam. Enrollment in the course is rolling. The ABE program distinguishes itself from the GED course primarily in targeted skill set. For the ABE course, activities focus on primary, even rudimentary knowledge acquisition and mastery of reading and math that can inform techniques and concepts designed to build toward future training at the GED level.

Throughout the project, the GED and ABE courses achieved considerable success in the eyes of program facilitators. Not only did many participants sit for and pass the GED and/or increase their reading and math grade level proficiency through ABE, but stakeholder interviews revealed great pride on the part of facilitators to be able to offer a high-quality, highly valued service to local residents. Building a partnership with Langston Terrace Dwellings so as to provide courses on site permitted FCTC staff once again to take services to the public, emphasizing a commitment to building accountability, confidence and self-esteem that empowers residents to develop better life skills. Moreover, as suggested with the Computer Basics course, simply providing access to computers and course trainings indicated to residents a genuine commitment on the part of staff to help improve their quality of life. This was particularly true for older residents, most of whom had never used a computer before participating in the GED or ABE courses. Also in support of successes identified through the Computer Basics course, maintaining flexibility and spontaneity in response to participant needs and limitations helped build warm, caring relationships between staff and participants. This flexibility likely increased participants' interest in building both educational and technological skills, even among those in whom technology skill was nonexistent at program entry. When extremely low skill levels serve as critical evidence of the educational and technological divide existing within communities, quick response to and respect of participant needs and limitations becomes a valued index of program accomplishment.

Indeed, it was through the GED and ABE courses that existing skill disparities within low-income, high-risk communities became most apparent and as such presented the most

significant challenge. As with other FCTC course offerings, the GED and ABE courses were originally designed to integrate multimedia and web-based technologies into the instructional process. However, challenges quickly arose using this approach. Specifically, participants enrolled in the GED course were largely focused on acquiring the strategies needed to pass the test and less interested in, or perhaps less able to, simultaneously acquire new computer-related techniques and skills. As such, participants paid less attention over time to activities and assignments highlighting technology, particularly if they competed with time and energy available to devote to GED-related drills and exercises. Program facilitators realized that participants achieved the most success when pursuing GED curriculum independently of technology training and thus dropped the technology angle during the 13-week course. In contrast, the ABE classes serve participants with more diffuse needs. As a result, incorporating computer learning and activities into course content was more welcomed by participants, who were looking to expand their skills on any level.

However, such programming challenges led to increased relationships with participants and ultimately fostered greater interest in technology. According to current testing procedures, participants completing the GED must usually wait 4 to 6 weeks for their test results. To make the most of this waiting period and increase participant use of and interest in the FCTC services, facilitators encouraged participants to use this period to engage in technology-based activities now that their preparation for the GED was completed. Such engagement could help strengthen their potential for job placement, educational opportunities and/or responsible citizenship after earning their GED. With such encouragement, participants were able to see the link between their own immediate needs (i.e., sitting for the GED) and the needs of the program (e.g., to raise skill levels across the community). The importance of this link cannot be overstated. Modification of and flexibility with the original design and intention of the GED class helped spark greater long-term interest and success in the program, as participants maintained their contact with FCTC staff and locations and extended their course commitment beyond the 13-week GED curriculum. But perhaps more importantly, quick response on the part of FCTC staff helped make program goals real for participants, thus increasing their buy-in and success. Creating this link between GED prep and computer training became a key mechanism through which community residents could continue developing practical and marketable skills for employment and/or higher learning. At all phases, participants were encouraged to either continue with technology-related activities and acquire basic employment skills or participate in remedial GED instruction, should they have failed to pass the first time.

Challenges to more comprehensive participation and enrollment in GED and ABE courses did surface, which likely impeded full utilization of GED and ABE courses. Specific challenges centered on family demands and lifestyle constraints, as it became evident that there was increased need among participants to have access to childcare services while classes were in session. Program staff considered several options, hoping to identify a way to meet participants' needs while minimizing budgetary burdens. In the end, however, employing a licensed, certified childcare provider was the only legitimate option. There was no room in the budget to hire additional personnel, as expense had already been incurred in hiring security to patrol the Blow-Pierce campus during PM classes. As such, program facilitators had to stay flexible if and when participants brought their children to class, particularly on Saturdays. Additional concerns

focused on transportation, to which few participants had access. To meet this need, money was earmarked for tokens on public transportation, which helped alleviate the problem somewhat.

III. Entrepreneurship and Small Investment

The Adult Entrepreneurship (AE) course is a 12-week course designed to teach participants how to conceptualize, market and ultimately create a small business through real-world and web-world application. Each week consists of a different module, in which particular themes or concepts related to business development are explored. Instruction on accounting and bookkeeping, marketing, business design and investment were included in weekly modules, as was instruction on Excel programming and development of virtual marketplaces. Instruction was supplemented by activities and exercises designed to help motivate participants to conceptualize the type of business they would like to develop and the work it would take to help accomplish their goals (*see Appendices G, H and I - AE Activities*). During Year III of the project, the AE course evolved into a more hands-on offering that helped interested participants complete basic paperwork and processing in order to get their small business started.

Experiences with the AE courses revealed gains in participant understanding of and interest in entrepreneurship. Interestingly, a significant accomplishment of the AE course was the successful mix of vocational and technological training, which stands in stark contrast to outcomes achieved in both the computer and educational programs. Although required elements were simplified over course offerings, participants were always instructed to create PowerPoint presentations to market their business and learn to use the Internet for research on business development. Moreover, participants were provided with tangibles (e.g., tax numbers) that helped make ownership of a small business or nonprofit that much more of a reality. Across both AE courses, program staff felt that participation helped empower local residents to believe in themselves and their ability to achieve their dreams.

As well designed and as comprehensive as the AE course was, however, program staff met with considerable challenge in successful implementation. The Entrepreneurial Series was among the first programs offered through the FCTC in Year II. However, the course was modified each time it was offered, in reaction to declining participant interest and engagement. When the 12-week program was first offered, technology skills were incorporated with essential business skill development, particularly as they related to bookkeeping (i.e., Excel) and marketing (i.e., development of company websites, PowerPoint presentations). During the second offering, however, the course focused more exclusively on business skill development and simplified (but did not eliminate) the instruction on technology, as it seemingly distracted participants from their larger interest in business design and conceptualization. During the third offering of the AE course, the focus shifted again in an effort to boost participation and resulted in the development of a two-session workshop on entrepreneurship, as opposed to the original 12-week course. These efforts failed to produce the level of participation and interest hoped for among staff.

By the end of Year II, a new course was developed to replace the original AE course. In contrast to the 12-week AE course that introduced basic elements and concepts of small business

design and start-up, the new course had no set length and focused specifically on teaching participants how to successfully navigate and complete the bureaucratic requirements affiliated with small business start-up, including tax ID forms, local licensure, Master License acquisition, and company insurance. The course also moved from the FCTC at Blow Pierce to Langston Terrace Dwellings, in an effort to target residents exclusively and provide potential participants with a more comfortable, familiar atmosphere. Although low in number, this revised class provided one-on-one consultation services to individuals interested in creating a business and met the goal of creating registered and certified business within the District. Moreover, application fees associated with the SS4 form (Tax ID) were covered for those enrolled, likely increasing the perceived benefit of participation and motivating participants to pursue their vocational interests and devise concrete plans for business development.

Of all the courses and services offered through the FCTC, the AE series was most vulnerable to the personal and emotional limitations of participants. Stakeholder interviews conducted with program facilitators revealed considerable resistance on the part of participants to “take ownership” of ideas and the work and commitment that must be achieved in order to lift a new business off the ground. Such resistance was not due to inability, however, as participant knowledge base grew over the course of the class, as demonstrated by participants’ independent construction and presentation of a PowerPoint marketing campaign at the end of the 12-week course. While participation was low, the original AE course provided participants with information and skills to promote a small business. Translating that knowledge into behavior, however, became the real challenge, as evidenced by participants’ anxiety in initiating those tasks necessary to move small business concepts to reality. For example, although staff helped participants secure items like a Federal ID tax number and a DUNS number, participants were expected to take the initiative and go to offices like the District of Columbia Office of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs to register their businesses and file a registration for business tax credits. Program staff reported some hostility on the part of participants, who felt abandoned and isolated by staff in having to complete such tasks on their own. In turn, program staff felt conflicted in relationships with participants and the extent to which their guidance and support should replace the intrinsic motivation participants needed to achieve their goals.

Lessons Learned

As stated earlier, the goals and objectives for the FCTC project were extensive and ambitious. Both FCTC program and leadership staff worked tirelessly to increase educational, vocational and technological skills within their community as a means through which to minimize the social disparities common in today’s urban settings. Services provided through the FCTC were comprehensive and attempted to adopt a fresh, even radical approach of infusing educational and vocational skills development and achievement with training in technology. Stakeholder interviews conducted with FCTC staff revealed moderate to strong perceived success in program implementation. Although services and programs were faced with certain challenges, staff managed to promote design modifications that sustained community interest in participation and secured the viability of programming over the course of the project. Interestingly, such modifications helped crystallize for staff the issues surrounding development of large-scale urban initiatives and the impact that the potential and the limitations of high-risk,

low-income residents has on overall program success. The following represents the key lessons learned by staff regarding implementation of the FCTC.

- **Build Relationships** – more than anything, program staff learned that meaningful relationships with participants were critical to success. Chronic exposure to poverty and the myriad of life issues associated with it can foster in any individual the inability to judge his/her own capacity to contribute to the community. Although not explicitly outlined in its initial conception, day-day functioning of the FCTC project evolved into focusing on the achievement of two goals simultaneously: 1) to build residents' self-image and confidence and convince them that they have ideas and abilities to contribute to society, while 2) providing them with the programs and services in which to cultivate those ideas and abilities. In treating both the personal and professional development of individuals, chances are increased that they will achieve significant gains in life skills and reach a better, more productive level of functioning.
- **Keep it Real** – program staff also learned the power of providing concrete deliverables to participants that reflects well on their personal growth and development in education and/or technology. For the GED and ABE courses, such deliverables came in the form of increased grade level functioning or passing scores on the GED. For the Computer Basics and AE courses, certificates of completion and acquisition of Federal Tax ID numbers served as an index of progress. By providing such evidence, and by empowering participants to start small and build their skills one step at a time, real change becomes possible.
- **Keep it Flexible** – finally, FCTC program staff learned that the best asset for any community-wide program is the ability to demonstrate flexibility at the administrative (e.g., locating new space when Blow Pierce site inaccessible) and programmatic (e.g., moving to self-paced instruction; making room in classes for children when daycare not available) level. As stated earlier, such flexibility helped sustain, even strengthen programs to respond better to participant needs and interests. Flexibility also reveals a willingness on the part of staff to do whatever it takes to promote the success of such a program for families and the community.

What these three themes best represent is the understanding on the part of program staff that participant needs and desires dictate the extent to which program components can and should be implemented as designed. Time and again, program staff from all three arenas highlighted the importance of taking services out into the community, to reach out and make that connection with residents in order to build trust and rapport. In doing so, FCTC program staff were better able to see, react to, and articulate the needs of their participants and make the necessary changes to course content and design so as to meet said needs. What participants sometimes lacked was initiative, confidence, and/or a sense of self-worth. As these struggles colored their ability and willingness to engage in FCTC services, program staff had to coach them and build resiliency across personal and professional domains. In essence, FCTC program staff revealed that only in first meeting participants' personal needs and desires could progress be made in professional skills development. That they were able to do so, and recognize the importance of such an act, remains the primary success of this project. Such behavior on the part

of FCTC staff is commendable, even though it impeded data collection efforts, both within and across programs and services.

B. Outcome Evaluation

Progress Toward Goals and Objectives

As stated earlier, the primary focus of the FCTC program is providing at-risk students, families, and community residents with access to educational and technological opportunities that help improve literacy levels and establish supports to meet the increasing demands of the marketplace. Qualitative data on the program provided through staff interviews and meetings clearly indicates a number of risk factors and challenges to program implementation. Outcome data collected on FCTC participants, while limited, speaks directly to targeted goals and reveals the impact the CTC program has made on community development.

Goal 1. Increase Access

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest accomplishments of the Friendship Community Technology Center (FCTC) project was achieved by increasing access to technology and technology-related educational and vocational services. Establishment of the FCTC at the FPCS Blow Pierce campus made advanced technology and services available to students and adults 15 hours a day, five days a week. Moreover, capitalizing on computer availability at Langston Terrace, Friendship House, and the remaining three FPCS campuses further provided community residents with increased access, especially on weekends and particularly in response to limited access at the Blow Pierce location by the end of Year II. Taking services to community members, rather than requiring community members to come to services, supports the Friendship House motto of participation through encouragement and support and helps minimize perceived barriers that exist between FCTC staff professionals and those they try to help.

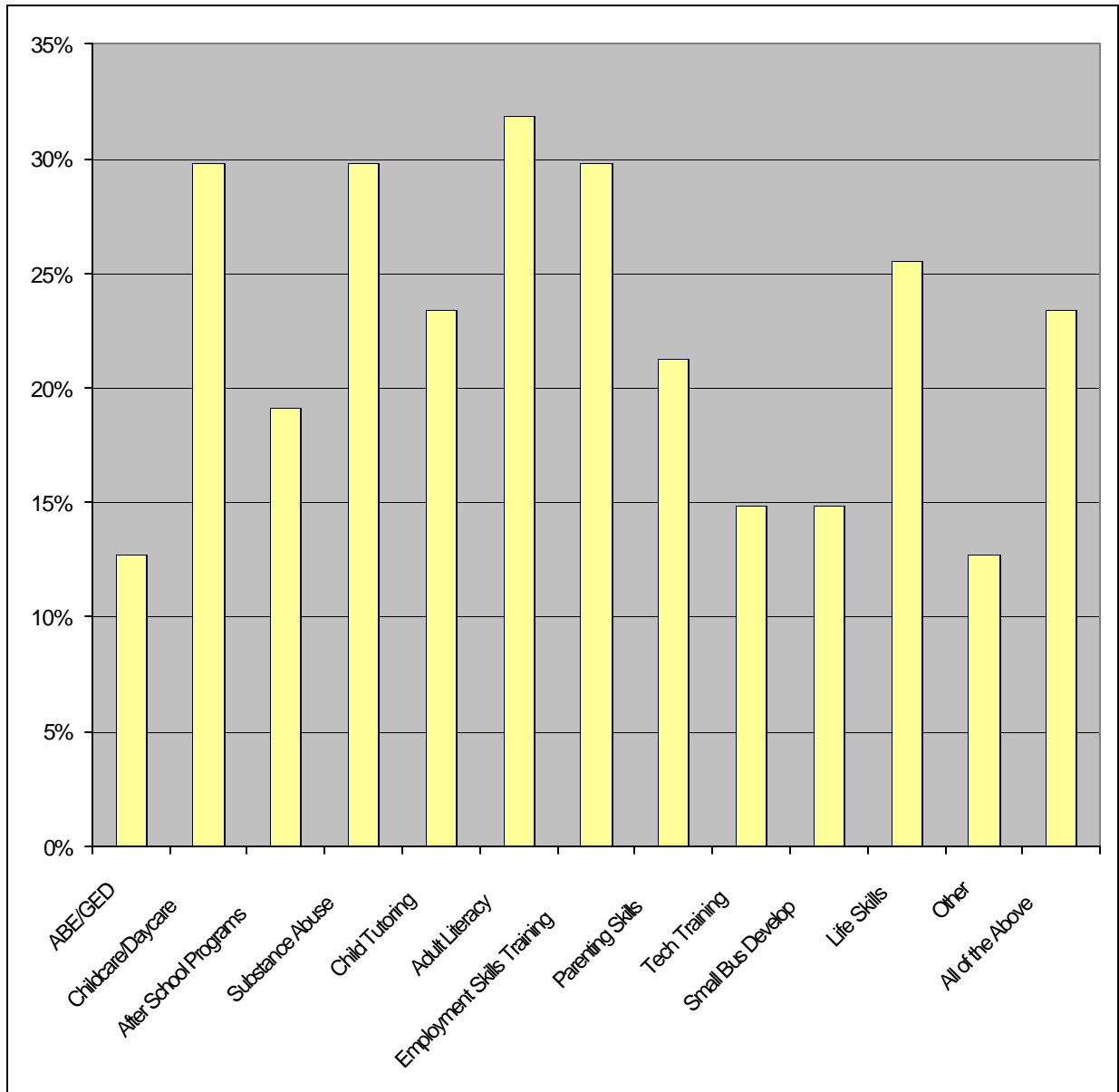
Staff recognized that simply providing more time and availability of computers addresses only half the issue. Providing quality programming that meets the interests and needs of participants also strengthens community reliance on and utilization of technology. To ensure that the FCTC, both at Blow Pierce and at satellite locations, was meeting the needs of community residents, two surveys were administered. The first survey, the Langston Dwellings Resident Survey, was distributed in May 2002. Efforts for Year III of the FCTC project were to target Langston Terrace residents specifically, as a way to increase participation in FCTC- and Friendship House-related programs and activities. To that end, Langston Terrace Resident Council members and local volunteers went door-door, soliciting feedback from residents regarding perceived need for and interest in services targeting family, work, and education. A total of 59 out of 307, surveys were partially or fully completed. This reflects a 19% response rate, which is commendable for populations that uniformly are reluctant to provide demographic and opinion data for programming needs and services.

Basic demographic data on respondents reveals the critical need for initiatives like the FCTC and the importance of alliances between socio-educational organizations like FPCS and urban public housing communities. At the time of the survey, 73% of those who responded

reported being unemployed, largely due to medical concerns (39%), disability (16%) or lack of skills (10%). In addition, 72% of those who responded reported living at Langston Terrace for up to 21 years. Such data highlights the chronic patterns that can result from prolonged exposure to poverty and the need for programs that can help break such cycles.

Specific activities and themes identified by Langston Terrace residents are highlighted in **Figure 1** below. Interestingly, over 32% of those surveyed expressed specific interest in adult literacy programs, while approximately 30% of those surveyed also expressed interest in employment skills training. Other popular areas of interest include services for childcare, substance abuse, and life skills. It should be noted that percentages reflected in **Figure 1** exceed 100%, as residents usually expressed interest in more than one service area.

Figure 1. Interest in Services – Langston Dwellings Survey Respondents

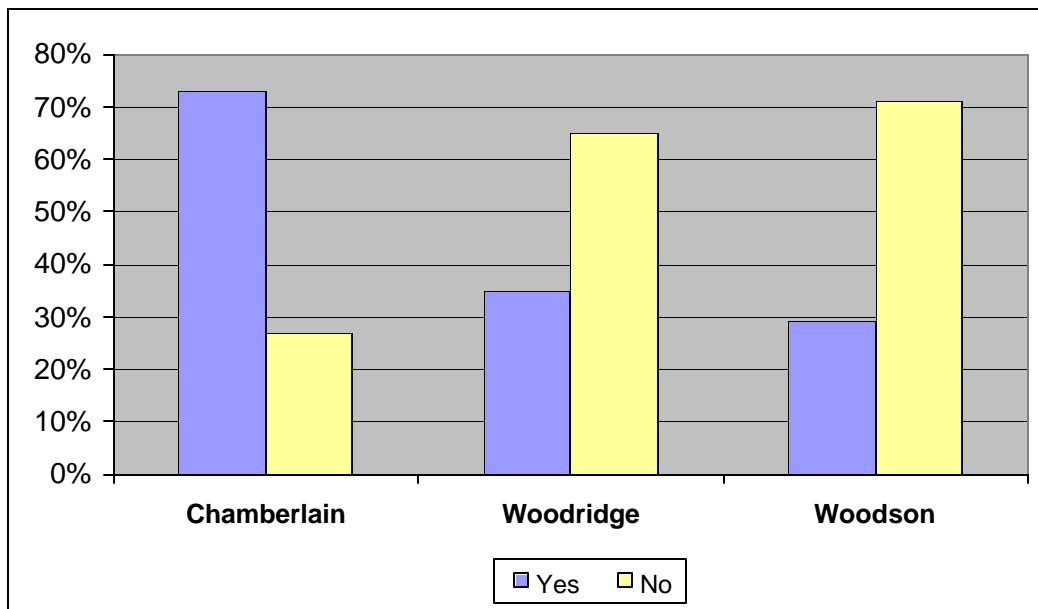


The second survey, the Computer Home-Roll Out Survey, was distributed in November 2002 at parent-teacher meetings across all four of the FPCS campuses. The Survey was designed in support of the Friendship CTC project and the development of www.friendshiptech.net, which itself was designed to increase access to and use of existing computers and digital resources. The Survey was distributed for two purposes: 1) to determine how, if at all, families were utilizing technology in the home, and 2) to determine to what extent families were aware of and utilizing existing Friendship House services. As with the Langston Dwellings Resident Survey, parents were encouraged to identify, from a pre-established list, those activities and services in which they were interested, as a way to strengthen community use available activities. Responses on the Roll-Out Survey were intended to inform the methods developed to create

online simulations that would be available through the website. As such, questions on the survey target frequency and type of computer use, as well as the use of the intranet to communicate with school administrators. Approximately 400 surveys were partially or fully completed.

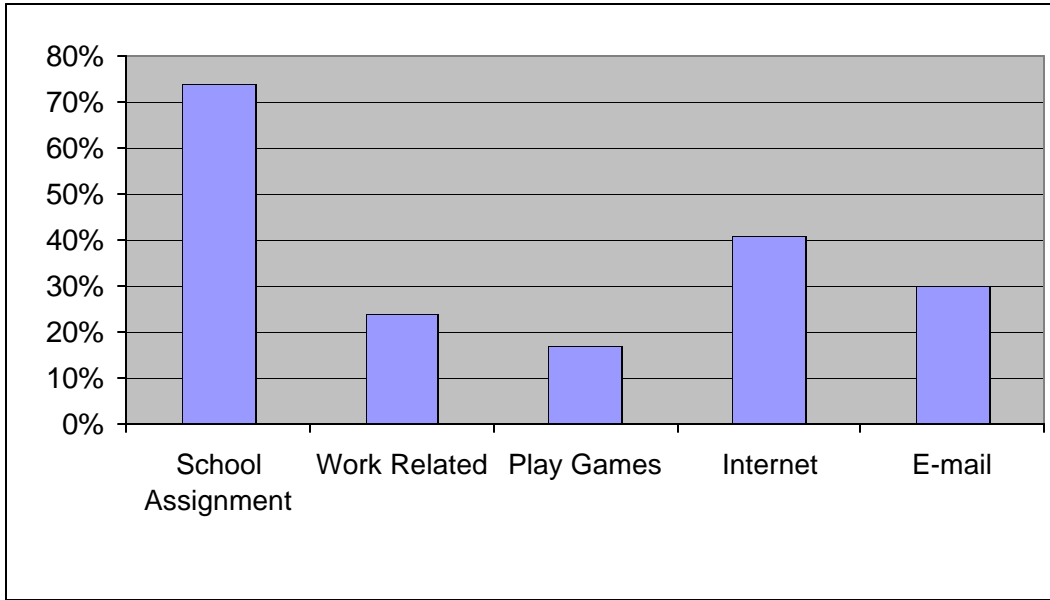
The Home Roll-Out Survey provides a good glimpse of computer access and level of comfort among FPCS students and their families going into Year III of the project. As evidenced in **Figure 2** below, the vast majority (72%) of families with students at Chamberlain have relied on the Home Roll-Out program to supply them with a PC. Interestingly, the trend is reversed for students at Woodridge and Woodson (35% and 29%, respectively), where the majority of families seemingly have not taken advantage of the program. Several conditions might explain such a discrepancy, including target audience (the Home Roll-Out caters to elementary students grade 3 and above) and socioeconomic status. Woodridge students largely come from a middle-income families and communities. In contrast, Chamberlain has higher percentage of truly needy families and is located in a lower-income community. It is also worth noting that 70% percent of those surveyed reported having a PC at home that was not provided through the Home Roll-Out program. Data was not available on families with students attending Blow Pierce.

Figure 2. Percent Families with a Home PC Through the Roll-Out Program



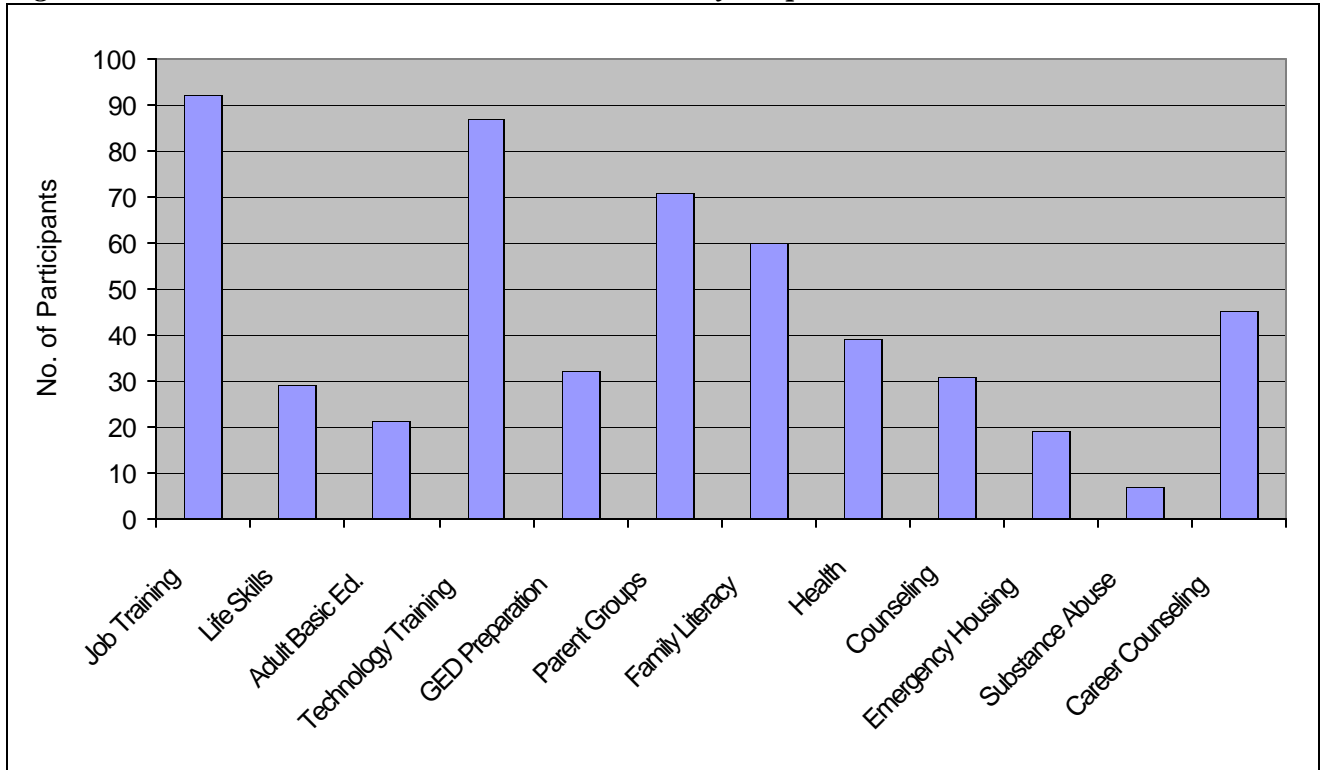
Additional data collected on the Home Roll-Out survey highlights participant use of computers while at home, as well as sustained interest in new services and programs. As can be seen in **Figure 3**, the majority of those surveyed (74%) reported that their children use home computers to complete schoolwork. Entertainment-related activities (e.g., surf the Internet, check email) came in a distant second, followed by work-related activities and games. Frequency of use was also investigated, where 45% of respondents reported computer use more than 10 times a week. Such habits suggest fairly high levels of comfort among those surveyed in either personal use or child use of computers in the home.

Figure 3. Student Computer Use While at Home



Finally, respondents were asked to reflect on their interest in additional computer training, as well as existing services offered through Friendship House. Over 60% of those surveyed expressed interest in additional computer training. As seen in **Figure 4** below, additional interests identified by FPCS families included job training, technology skills training, parent groups, family literacy, and career counseling. Such trends are similar to those reported 6 months earlier on the Langston Dwellings Survey, where residents revealed interest in educational and vocational advancement. To the extent that a portion of these families and community residents participated in FCTC activities reflects well on the project to connect to and engage a target population in critical need of support. However, the strong interest expressed by community residents on both the Langston Dwellings Survey and the Home Roll-Out Survey stands in sharp contrast to overall attendance and participation throughout the project, which was likely mitigated by personal and contextual limitations highlighted earlier in this report.

Figure 4. Interest in Services – Home Roll-Out Survey Respondents



As stated earlier, increased access to computers and technology-based programming is a significant accomplishment of the initiative. Feedback solicited from community members and families helped ensure that CTC staff provided meaningful opportunities for children to sharpen their technological skills during and after school and for adults to increase their educational and vocational skills at night and on weekends. At the same time, staff successfully confronted the challenges that arose with daytime access to the CTC and established services at multiple sites around the community. This worked to minimize potential barriers to participation (e.g., lack of transportation, fear and anxiety of the unfamiliar) and empower at-risk adults to raise their expectations for themselves and their children.

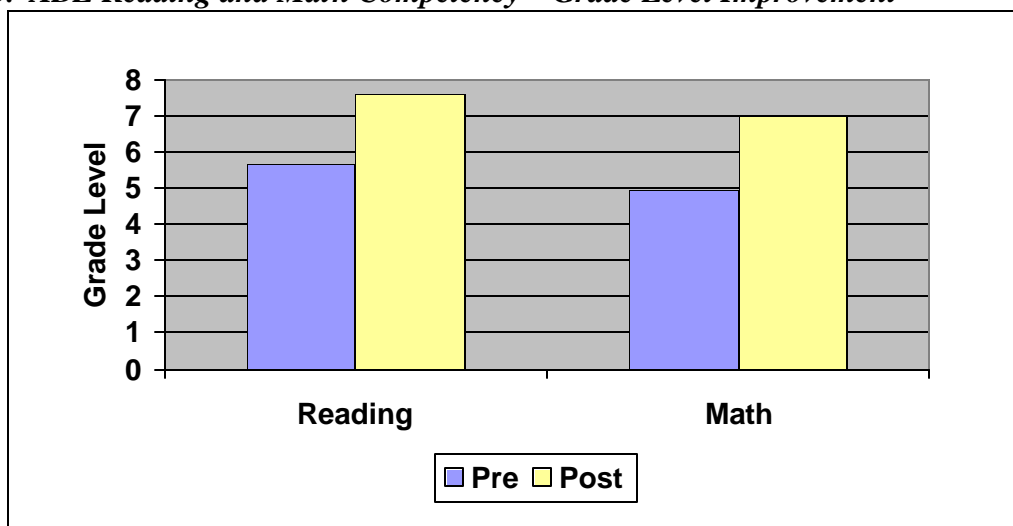
Goal 2. Increase Employability

A. Grade Level Promotion In order to strengthen local residents’ chances and opportunities for sustained employment, GED and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes were offered during the day, at night, and on weekends. So as to provide the best level of instruction to participants enrolled in literacy classes, the CASAS exam was administered prior to enrollment. The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is a primary source for adult education instruction and evaluation. The only assessment system to be validated by the U.S. Department of Education, CASAS tests focus on the functional application of basic skills in specific employment or life skills contexts. The results of these tests are reported as scaled scores that reflect a range of skill levels from beginning literacy to high school completion.

Of particular interest to this project was participant performance on the Life Skills Assessment series of the CASAS tests. The Life Skills Assessment is used with ABE programs to identify basic proficiencies in reading and math. Although the Life Skills Appraisal test is recommended at program entry, the Pre- and Post-tests provide a general profile of function and competency. The Life Skills Pre-test is administered at baseline, while the Life Skills Post-test is administered after 80-100 hours of instruction have been given.

The Life Skills Pre- and Post-tests were used to track participants in the ABE program offered through the CTC and to document rate of change in core reading and math competency. As the ABE program was approximately 13 weeks in length, participants were administered the Pre-test at program entry and the Post-Test approximately three months later. Data was collected on 29 adults participating in the ABE program and is presented in **Figure 5**. On average, adults entered the ABE program functioning at a 5th grade reading and math level. After completing the ABE course, reading and math scores for participants improved two grade levels, reflecting well on the quality of the curriculum and the commitment among participants to make such significant changes in a relatively short amount of time.

Figure 5. ABE Reading and Math Competency – Grade Level Improvement



B. GED Completion. While 29 participants who enrolled in and completed the ABE course presented with below-average reading and math competency, five adults tested for high reading and math competency at Pre-test assessment. These five participants entered the ABE program functioning at an 11th grade reading and math level, and upon completion of the course, achieved a competency level equal to that of a high school graduate. Three of these five participants went on to sit for the GED, in addition to 29 participants who enrolled in the GED ‘Fast Track’ prep course. All 32 participants passed the GED, making this course another significant accomplishment of the FCTC. While it could be suggested that quality of the curriculum and high participant motivation accounts for this rate of success, a lack of available data on GED course content and structure, as well as feedback from participants, reflects the importance of

tracking procedures to verify achievements in outcomes. However, levels of success achieved did earn the notice of the District, who recognized the FCTC as one of the most successful resources in helping low-income residents achieve passing scores on the GED.

C. Computer Literacy. While many participants focused on educational advancement, others were interested in sharpening and/or developing technological literacy for use in the marketplace. To that end, several computer courses were offered over the course of the project, including a Computer Basics course offered at the FCTC, a Computer Fundamentals course offered at Langston Terrace Dwellings and a Microsoft Word course offered in conjunction with the Basics course at the FCTC and independently at the Friendship House (FH) Connect Lab. The FCTC hosted an Open House during Years II and III of the project as a way through which to introduce available services and programs to the community. Participants who were interested in computer courses were encouraged to complete a registration form. A total of 52 official registration forms were collected over the course of the project.

Upon enrollment into a Computer Basics or Computer Fundamentals course, participants were asked to complete a Participant Interview form, which identifies participants' experience with and understanding of basic computer hardware (e.g., mouse, keyboard) and software (e.g., Windows, MS Word). Participant Interview data was available on 10 participants and is highlighted in **Table 3**. As can be seen in the table, most participants who completed the interview reported familiarity and comfort with basic computer components at program entry. A few even reported some experience with more advance software programs like Lotus 1,2,3 and Microsoft Access. Such data was used to inform curricula and activities development for participants engaged in Computer Basics and Computer Fundamentals courses.

Table 3. Participant Computer Experience at Entry

Question	Yes	No
Are you Familiar with the keyboard?	100%	
Are you comfortable using the mouse?	100%	
Have you had any Windows 98/2000 training?	50%	50%
Do you know how to maximize/minimize a window?	60%	40%
Have you used MS Word?	50%	50%
Have you used any other word processing or basic software application(s)?	40%	60%
If so, what kinds?*		
- Access,	10%	
- Lotus	10%	
- Excel	20%	
- PowerPoint	10%	
- WordPerfect	10%	

* Percentages greater than 40%, as some respondents report use of multiple programs

Data provided in **Table 4** below reflects participant attendance in the various computer classes offered through the FCTC over Years II and III of the project. As can be seen in the table, course offerings grew over the course of the project as participant interests evolved. Specifically, the Computer Basics/Word course was the only technology course offered during Year II of the project. During Year III, however, participant interest extended to PowerPoint and Excel, initiating the need to provide instruction on these types of computer programs. The extremely low participation rate in the Computer Basics course during Year III could indicate participants' decreased need for basic computer literacy and an increased desire to enhance specific skill sets. It should be noted, however, that attendance data reflected here was collected in aggregate form and not on a consistent basis; as participants were not tracked across classes, there is no way to determine how many, if any, reflect duplicated cases.

Table 4. Participant Attendance by Course and Location*

	Year II	Year III
<i>CTC Blow Pierce:</i>		
Class -		
DC Juniors		
Broadcasters	24	410
G.O.Y.A.	17	150
Robotics and Engineering	22	22
Computer Basics w/ MS Word	115	N/a
Adult Entrepreneurial Class – I	36	N/a
<i>Langston Terrace:</i>		
Class -		
GED Prep	32	49
Computer Fundamentals	20	47
Adult Entrepreneurial Class – II	12	4
<i>FH Connect Lab:</i>		
Class –		
Computer Basics	25	50
MS Word	29	82
MS PowerPoint		16
MS Excel		39
<i>FPCS Woodson HS Campus:</i>		
Class -		
Home Roll-Out Training	54	69

* Numbers reflect aggregated data; duplicated cases not tracked.

Goal 3. Increase Employment

Small Business. Objectives centering on employment for participants at the FCTC focused on increasing levels of job placement, retention, and promotion and expanding the network of small businesses in community. This ambitious goal reveals the priority placed not only on equipping at-risk communities with the skills they need to improve their economic situations, but also encouraging individuals to put such skills to work. Activities developed under this objective looked to change not only the knowledge base of participants, but their behavior in the community, making it the most difficult component of the project to achieve. Indeed, it was proposed that 25 new businesses would be developed through participation in the Adult Entrepreneurial course and/or participation in the subsequent Small Business Start-Up Course. While surveys administered to Langston Terrace residents and FPCS families did reveal a sizeable interest in career counseling, job training, and employment skills training, only 4 individuals took advantage of the modified Adult Entrepreneurial (AE) course in Year III. Despite sincere efforts to restructure the small business course offerings provided through the FCTC, the initiative failed to successfully construct 25 businesses as originally proposed.

Nevertheless, all four individuals who completed the modified AE course successfully developed a business idea and attained required tax identification data. **Table 5** highlights achievements for these four individuals. At the close of Year III, efforts to build and establish worthwhile businesses in the community look promising.

Table 5. Small Business Development

Business	DUNS Number Attained?	Federal Tax ID Number Attained?	Progress
Healthcare resource and referral center (nonprofit)	Yes	Yes	Obtaining 501 (c) 3 status and preparing Articles of Incorporation
Consulting firm for work with nonprofit organizations	Yes	Yes	Securing local and federal business licenses and permits
Home/commercial cleaning service	Yes	Yes	Securing local and federal business licenses and permits; developing client referrals and resource contacts
Video/photography business	No	Yes	Securing local and federal business licenses and permits; developing client referrals and contacts

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Friendship-Edison Community Technology Center (FCTC) was a three-year program designed to improve literacy and educational achievement and increase vocational opportunities for urban community residents. Created in 2000 by way of Department of Education Community Technology Center funding, the FCTC specifically targeted increased technological skills and capacity (e.g., computer literacy, programming) so as to promote educational (e.g., GED prep, ABE curriculum, DC Juniors after-school programming) and vocational (e.g., AE courses, small business development) achievement among students, families and community residents in and around Ward 7 of Washington DC. With a central site located at the FPCS Junior Academy at Blow Pierce and at satellite locations at Friendship House, Langston Terrace public housing, and the remaining FPCS campuses, participants were provided with increased opportunities to access state of the art programming and services.

Recent initiatives like the Community Technology Center (CTC) Program offered through the Department of Education maintain a primary focus on bringing technology in line with educational practices and curricula. Current perspectives on low-performing schools and communities suggest that teaching children and adults to appreciate technology is not enough. Rather, children and adults must be educated *through* technology, as a means through which to narrow performance gaps between high- and low-performing schools and communities and create students and families with sharper minds and skills. Monies attained through the CTC grant helped the Friendship-Edison Public Charter Schools (FPCS) system establish a focus on literacy and technology skill development among low-income families and community residents. With a specific focus on increasing access to computers, computer-based learning, and basic education to needy neighborhoods, the FCTC could help impoverished community members eliminate disparities in socially and economically depressed environments so as to close the educational, vocational, and technological divide.

Participants of the FCTC were provided with extensive services that both targeted and linked education and job training with computer and technological literacy. Specifically, the DC Juniors after-school program targeted student interest in video production, clay animation, and robotics as a way to strengthen academic skills and achievement. At the same time, the Home Roll-Out Program served as an additional link between education and technology by placing computers in the homes of FPCS students so as to strengthen computer literacy within the family and promote greater interest among parents in their education and the education of their children. The GED prep and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes targeted adult interest in sharpening existing and/or developing new reading and math skills as a way to increase opportunities for employment, while the Adult Entrepreneurial (AE) courses targeted small business development and skills training in Internet research, web marketing and multimedia presentations. Equipment provided at the FCTC main site at Blow Pierce included one server and teacher workstation, 18

desktop computers with Internet access, an interactive whiteboard, and multiple scanners and digital cameras.

Overall, the program outlined for implementation was ambitious. The task of combining technology and learning, while practical, has not been consistently done in community-based initiatives and as such makes formulation and/or replication of theoretical models difficult to do. Nonetheless, programs and services offered through the FCTC attempted to market creative applications of technology to a population largely unfamiliar with the medium and worked to link such application to real-world situations and outcomes. This was coupled with a continued focus on community development, whereby increasing access to technology through partnerships with public housing organizations like Langston Terrace and social service organizations like Friendship House helped establish FCTC program staff as one committed to and respectful of the interests, aspirations and limitations of participants. Moreover, in linking education and vocation with technology for students and adults alike, the vision of FPCS and the Community School model moved closer to actualization. Through the Community School model, students develop academic and technological skills that increase their chances of employability by community-based businesses, thereby fostering a prolonged interest in and commitment to the community. Through this model, students and adults learn to rely on each other to build a stronger, more productive community in which to live.

Multiple challenges and issues arose for the FCTC over the three-year grant period, based largely on organizational constraints. Specifically, daytime scheduling and availability of FCTC services for adults was terminated at the Blow Pierce site during Year II due to issues surrounding student security. This change forced FCTC program staff to redesign courses that fit better with more limited venues like the Friendship House 'Connect' Lab and the Langston Terrace Multipurpose Center. These changes also impacted data collection and tracking. Specifically, program staff were unable to successfully document enrollment and participation, as course offerings generally moved from structured, group instruction to self-paced, individualized instruction. This move, while potentially better for participants, made consistent data collection on outcomes and perceived satisfaction difficult to conduct. As such, information on targeted goals and objectives was minimal.

Challenges were also linked to the ability of and the demands placed on staff. Specifically, program staff, while highly committed to their roles, may not necessarily have possessed the skills to design, implement and monitor FCTC program components. Inconsistencies with data tracking and collection, while linked to programmatic changes, were also due in part to the inability or unawareness of staff to implement and safeguard against the kinds of problems that arose. At the same time, staff may have not been provided with a clear enough understanding of the evaluation plan for the project, in which the need for strong data collection efforts was prioritized and emphasized. The need for consistent, quality communication between leadership and program staff is particularly critical for a project like this one, where services are designed to empower both the personal and professional development of individuals. In this case, communication serves not only as quality assurance for data collection, but also as support for staff and the emotional challenges they face. For participants who may struggle with a sense of failure or a pervasive lack of self-esteem, confidence, future orientation,

attending to the educational and vocational needs is hard. Consistent management supervision can help keep staff on track professionally and emotionally to ensure full success of the project

Although these system-wide challenges impacted the program implementation for the FCTC, success was achieved on a variety of levels, most notably in the areas of staff-participant relationships. FCTC program staff identified the importance of establishing trust and respect with participants and maintaining flexibility in the face of participant needs and limitations. This, in turn, led to a strong conviction among staff that the FCTC project was a success, both in building participants; confidence and self-worth, as well as their educational and technological skills. In terms of targeted goals and objectives, partnerships with Friendship House and Langston Terrace ensured increased access to technology within the community and provided for a wide range of services available throughout the day, seven days a week. Moreover, course offerings helped improve academic standing and GED attainment for a number of participants. Such success with the GED course helped earn the FCTC special recognition from the District as a quality resource to low-income residents.

Success can also be measured by efforts for sustainability. Specifically, FCTC leadership staff has worked hard during Year III to ensure that program components continue to be offered. So as to capitalize on existing space, a computer 'Smart Lab' has been installed at Blow Pierce, while existing FCTC equipment has been moved to the Woodson High School campus for use by older students enrolled in the Fiscal Networking Program in CISCO. Further, plans for extending DC Juniors after-school enrichment to Langston Terrace Dwellings are in development and are expected to be underway during the 2003-2004 academic year. Plans for the FriendshipTech.net website also continue, with specific focus on online tutorials that provide basic information on technology skills, as well as development of an online store for students, made possible by a \$20,000 grant from Citibank. Finally, proposals have been submitted to continue GED and ABE courses at Langston Terrace, with a particular focus on residents living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Sustainability efforts are also looking for funding to enhance existing services. Given the space constraints imposed throughout the duration of this project, FCTC leadership staff is now looking to build mobile technology centers that increase flexibility and accessibility for use. Specifically, proposals have been submitted to create wireless technology "carts" for use in classrooms at Blow Pierce. Along the same lines, additional proposals have targeted the development of 'island' based learning, in which Blow Pierce students learn about concepts like engineering and photo development at individual 'islands' within the Smart Lab completed in June 2003. In this way, learning is still interactive, but unique to a student's interest and individualized to his/her learning level.

The focus on technology as a gateway to improved social, economic and intellectual standing is growing increasingly popular among current community-based initiatives. While fresh and innovative, findings from the FCTC project reveal the impact that participant needs and perceived limitations have on overall project gains and achievement. As such, building personal relationships with participants is an important precursor to building educational and vocational skills and must be recognized as a legitimate, deliberate course of action when formulating project design. To that end, management supervision must remain aware of the

importance of establishing a sense of connectedness with the community and prioritize this development over that of technology. Once community needs have been met personally and emotionally, participation in and commitment to skills learning will likely increase, thereby increasing the likelihood of effecting real change in the community.

Appendix A – Friendship House/ Friendship-Edison Charter School Organizational Chart

Friendship House

Non-profit since 1904
D. Hense, President & CEO

Edison Schools, Inc.

Private manager of public schools
Over 100 partner schools nationwide

Friendship Public Charter Schools

Chartered 1997
4 campuses
2500 students

D. Hense, Chairman of Board; M. Procter, Chief of Staff

Dept of Technology & Extended Learning

Troy Wolfe, Director of Info. and Ed Tech

- o Computer lab for DC Kids
- o Teacher training
- o Lexia software
- o Computer lab for DC Junior and Community through CTC

Chamberlain Elementary

Grades K-5
SE, Wash DC

Woodridge Elementary

Grades K-5
NE, Wash DC

Blow Pierce Junior Academy

Grades 6-8
NE, Wash DC

Carter G. Woodson Collegiate Academy

Grades 9-12
NE, Wash DC

Friendship House DCKids Extended Day Program

Before and after school care
For boys and girls aged 4.5-12

- o Tutoring
- o Character development
- o Field trips
- o Recreation, arts
- o Computers

Community Technology Center

For students aged 13-16, parents, and members of the community

- o Computer classes
- o GED/ABE classes
- o Business classes
- o Home Roll-Out Survey
- o DC Juniors (Extended Learning Prog.)

Sports, arts, academic & leadership training clubs for students

Friendship House Connect Lab

- o Comp Basics
- o MS Word

Langston Terrace Dwellings

- o Comp Fundam.
- o GED Prep

Friendship House DCKids Summer Camp 5 weeks

21st Century Community Learning Center Grant

- USDE funded
- 3 years
- for expansion of CLCs within public school buildings

Community Technology Center Grant - USDE funded

- 3 years
- for promotion of programs that increase skills in and access to technology in communities

Appendix B – Evaluation Plan

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FRIENDSHIP COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE CENTER
Evaluation Contract
Rev. #4-September 27, 2002

Introduction

The Friendship Community Technology Resource Center (FCTRC) completed its second year of a Department of Education funded Community Technology Center grant. Initially funded in April 2000, the project was designed to provide access to computers and technology for over 2,000 low-income adults and children residing in the economically distressed target area in the Northeast quadrant of the District of Columbia. The project is designed to bolster the literacy, math, and job opportunities of at-risk youth and adults through the use of computers and the development of technology skills. Over the past two years, the FCTRC has used formative feedback to modify the project to better meet the needs and constraints of the local school and community. In order to continue to conduct internal monitoring of program operations and outcomes, the FCTRC plans to develop a database and reporting mechanism.

The purpose of this proposal is to outline a plan to evaluate FCTRC program implementation, the effectiveness of the project in achieving its objectives, and the impact of the project on youth and adult participants. Additionally, technical assistance on database development and reporting is proposed.

Method

The proposed evaluation will continue to provide formative information to assist the FCTRC in program improvement. Additionally, qualitative and quantitative data will be collected from multiple sources to identify and describe mediating influences that may impact achievement of outcomes.

Some of the specific evaluation questions to be examined are:

- o Does the FCTRC provide access to computer technologies to individuals who did not have access from another source? What are the characteristics of the youth and families who use the center programs?
- o What factors facilitate or act as barriers to center utilization by youth and families?

- o Do the FCTRC programs increase employability through literacy, job skills, and computer skills?
- o Is the entrepreneurship component effective in creating and expanding opportunities for local businesses in the community?
- o Are there differences in utilization and outcomes for Friendship Charter School students and their families vs. community adults and at-risk youth?
- o What is the role of community partnerships in the planning, implementation, and sustainability of the center?
- o What program components, materials/software, communications technologies, instructional techniques, staff characteristics, outreach activities, are most effective in engaging and retaining participants in a culturally competent manner?
- o Does web-based and virtual classroom learning options increase utilization and success in achieving outcomes?

Evaluation Tasks

I. Evaluation Management – In order to perform the formative function of the evaluation, ongoing interaction between the program staff and evaluation team is necessary. Evaluation meetings, phone conferences and site visits will be used to accomplish this.

II. Process Evaluation – The process evaluation documents the evolution and implementation of the program in order to provide feedback to administrators, to interpret mediating influences on outcomes, and for program replication. Quantitative data will be collected on technological capacity, service utilization, staffing, and administration of FCTRC program components, and youth and family demographics from program files. These will be supplemented with qualitative data collection methods, including observations of program activities, collection and review of relevant program documents, stakeholder interviews, and participant surveys.

III. Outcome Evaluation - The outcome evaluation examines the impact and the effectiveness of the program activities on participants and progress towards meeting stated goals and objectives. Data on literacy rates, GED rates, on-time promotion rates and student attendance/drop-out rates, adult employment rates, and number and type of small businesses in the local community will be collected. To assess program impact on individual youth and adult participants, baseline and follow-up data will be collected on demographics, academic functioning, literacy, education level, employment, computer literacy, and job skills. Also included in this task is the technical assistance provided to the project on database development and reporting mechanisms.

IV. Reporting - Informal feedback will be provided on an ongoing basis. Reports on program observations, service utilization, and stakeholder interviews will be provided as completed. Participant and Staff Survey reports will be completed on an annual basis. The information gathered in Tasks I, II, and III will be summarized in an annual evaluation report.

Table 1 provides a delineation of evaluation tasks, projected hours per task, and the budget for completion of the evaluation.

Data Variables

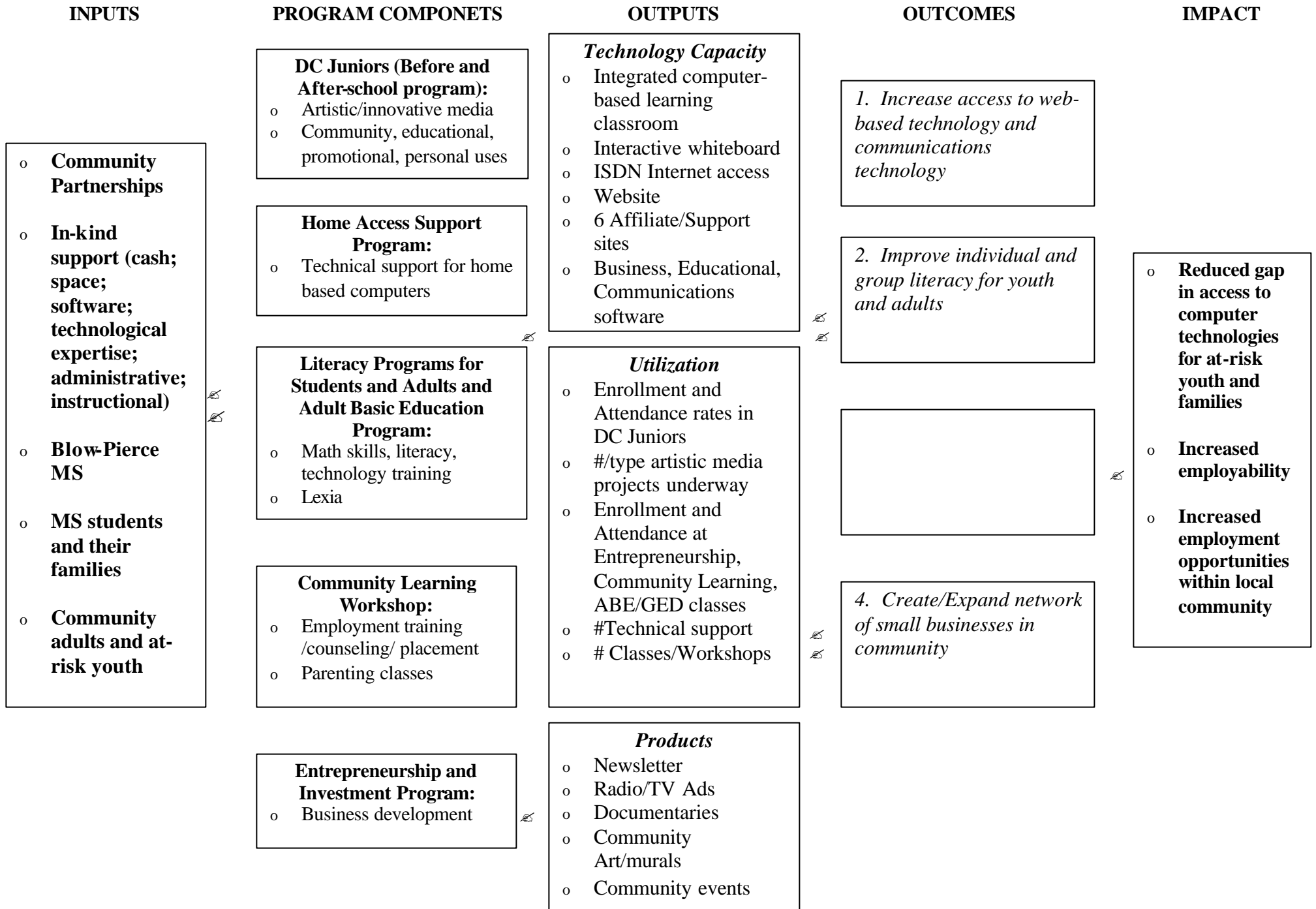
- o Enrollment/intake info-prior computer /technology use; demogs; grade levels (youth); employment/education levels (adults); goals/expectations from program
- o Program attendance-all components/#hits (cookies?)
- o SAT-9/ promotion records for youth participants
- o ABE/GED completion
- o Self-sufficiency update (upon completion of program or end of fiscal year on adult participants) to update educational and employment status
- o # Business licenses paid for by program

COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTER EVALUATION PLAN

<i>Program Goal I : Reduce gap in access to computer technologies</i>					
Intermediate Outcome Objectives		Process Objectives	Measures/ Indicators	Data Source	
1.	Increase access to web-based and communications technologies	Create integrated computer based learning classroom Provide access and track utilization of computer technologies	Enrollment and attendance #s Participant Self-report surveys	Program records Participants	
<i>Program Goal II: Increase employability</i>					
Intermediate Outcome Objectives		Process Objectives	Indicators	Data Source	
1.	Improve individual and group literacy levels	Implement educational software	Completion rates Weekly Schedules Enrollment and Attendance	Site Program records	
2.	Increase grade level promotion for students	Build reading and math skills through computer curricula and technological activities	Stanford Ach. Test –9 results #/% youth participants advancing to next grade	SAT-9 report School reports of promotion	
3.	Increase GED attainment for adult learners	Provide skill building, ABE, GED classes	#/% participants attaining GED	Program records/ GED results	
<i>Program Goal III: Increase employment opportunities in community</i>					
Intermediate Outcome Objectives		Process Objectives	Indicators	Data Source	
1.	Increase levels of job placement, retention, and promotion for adults	Solicit TANF for support of community workshops to assist with job promotion and placement	% TANF support # Workshops # Jobs secured	Program records Participant surveys	
2.	Create/expand network of small businesses in community	Conduct topical business series Create 25 new businesses	# Workshops conducted Workshop attendance # Business licenses secured	Program records SS4 Forms	

Appendix C

Friendship Community Technology Resource Center (FCTRC) Logic Model



Appendix D

Friendship-Edison Community Technology Center Staff Tenure

Name	Position	Tenure
<i>Leadership Staff:</i>		
Joe Harris	Project Director, FCTC	April 2000 – April 2003
Troy Wolfe	Director, Technology and Extended Learning	April 2000 – April 2003
<i>Program Staff:</i>		
Elyse Ashby	Project Coordinator, Adult Entrepreneurial Series	April 2001 – April 2003
Janice Peterson	Project Coordinator, Computer Basics with MS Word, Computer Fundamentals	April 2001 – April 2003
Lisa Rucker	Project Coordinator, GED Prep, Adult Basic Education	April 2001 – April 2003