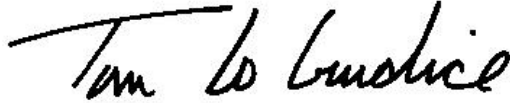


Seminar Paper

The attached seminar paper by, Shaune Vann, entitled, A Project in Strategic Planning for the Young Women's Christian Association Transitional Housing Program, is approved.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Lo Giudice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Approved
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KEY TERMS:

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING, YWCA

A PROJECT IN STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE YWCA TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ABSTRACT

The YWCA of Southeast Wisconsin has been part of the Milwaukee Community since 1832, “social advocacy are the cornerstones of the YWCA.” (See “YWCA Southeast Wisconsin,” 2012). From the aspect of the case manager how could strategic planning not only be implemented but be more effective for the participants. In analyzing this it is to try to define based on our economic times, and even from a political standpoint how would the agency increase productivity or be more effective while things are changing rapidly. In looking at the outcome of THP participants how was the agency going to assure that they were accomplishing their goals but at the same time sustain stability. This paper may have a lot more questions than answers but in analyzing some keys points it would be possible to not only come up with a strategic plan for the agency but it would enhance its efficiency.

Key Terms:

Transitional Housing, YWCA

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Young Women's Christian Association is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. Globally they are more than 25 million members in 22 countries, including 2 million in 300 local associations in the United States. The information in this section came from the YWCA website unless otherwise cited. The YWCA of Greater Milwaukee had been part of the Milwaukee community since 1832, "Social action and advocacy are the cornerstones of the YWCA," (See "YWCA Southeast Wisconsin:" 2012).

Although the YWCA offered numerous programs the particular program that was going to be focused on was their transitional housing program. The YWCA Transitional Housing Program (THP) provided transitional housing (up to two years) and supportive services for women and their children that were experiencing homelessness. THP reached low-income women and their children from the Milwaukee's central city, especially those who were African American.

The challenges that this particular target population faced are poverty, unemployment, and underemployment and kept many of those women and their families on the brink of homelessness.

THP's primary services were developed and implemented to break this cycle of homelessness by addressing interpersonal skill building, work related education, parenting skills, AODA treatment, mental health consultation, family dynamics and other related issues.

Statement of the Problem

There are several reasons why the YWCA is a good choice for strategic planning. Although the organization is in the community when redefined it would services more clients and be more effective.

Based on current economic times and from a political stand point could the agency increase productivity or be more effective in a rapidly changing environment. How could engage in partnerships help increase productivity? When the situation was looked at could THP increase funding so that the agency could get donors for capacity building or general operating funds versus specific programs?

In looking at the outcome of THP clients how had the agency assured that they were accomplishing their goals but at the same time stability. The information in this section came from the YWCA website unless otherwise cited.

Definition of Terms

YWCA Southeastern Wisconsin: defines itself as, “We provide low-income women and their families the tools they need to achieve economic success. This is accomplished by connecting those we serve with affordable housing, education resources, job skills, training and racial justice programming,” (See "YWCA Southeast Wisconsin:" 2012).

Partnership: typically referred to in the business or agency aspect,”... is an independent full-service agency, a group of likeminded people who work together to deliver ideas and strategies that improve business...” (See The partnership: Advertising & marketing, 2013).

Productivity: One definition of productivity has been defined as “Productivity equals value divided by time, (Pavlina, 2005). For the purpose of this project productivity in the human service field and or agency will be determined according to the direct service levels that are provided to clients.

Significance of the Study

The YWCA SEW conducted a project for strategic planning to increase productivity for the THP (Transitional Housing Program).

Purpose of the Study

To determine the best ways that can be used to provide not only essential services for the participants but to increase the success level and outcomes of the women.

Chapter 2

What Strategic Planning Is

Strategic planning is the concept of “a continuous and systematic process where people make decisions about intended future outcomes, how outcomes are to be accomplished and how success is measured and evaluated.” Some key components in strategic planning is that it’s an on-going process and that it’s “success depends on it purposefully becoming an uninterrupted and never ending cycle,” (“Learn more about,” 2003).

In the non-profit sector, which is the sector of the YWCA, it is just as important for the agency to not only have a strategic plan but be able to set and define the “strategic direction” in which the agency is headed, (McNamara). There are a number of successful strategic plans including, “SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, defining performance outcomes, assessment of programs and focus groups, (Prentice, 2012).

In designing a strategic plan for the YWCA THP it was noted that it serves and average of 35 families per year. What would be envisioned for a 5 year strategic plan would be a way to restructure the program so that it would be more effective and efficient. Steps would also be implemented to increase the level of self-sufficiency in the women. In dealing with the strategy proposal for THP the implementation and necessary steps were primarily delegated to the program manager. When the YWCA considered hiring additional staff members for THP it is the program manager who is responsible for planning, organizing leading and controlling staff. In having this type of authority the program manager knows what particular individual would be successful in what position. In addition, the dynamics or the central role of the managers distinguished the effectiveness of the strategy.

In the SWOT analysis of the program one of our strengths were because THP had been a two year program the time frame was sufficient for resident to make solid progress in obtaining self-sufficiency. The staff was dedicated and highly competent and the agency was fully committed to reach the real need of the clients.

Some weaknesses consisted of limited staff for workload how progress and impact would be effectively benchmarked, how to increase volunteer engagement which included the number and depth of the involvement but most importantly how to generate more revenue in funding.

When the opportunities were looked at, there were several notable ones such as abundance of customers to serve in the program, connecting with charitable organizations to create partnerships, diversification, and to continue to be able to offer a quality program for the important clients that it served.

Threats that were evident were how the political climate would affect the program. Each year the monies available appeared to be smaller but the number of agencies that applied for funds increased. One of the most critical threats to the THP program was operating program too thin (staff) so that results were not being achieved.

The YWCA, after taking the analysis of SWOT and other factors into consideration, used the program manager's capabilities to decipher what was needed, in essence the internal resource to be able to efficiently implement the strategy. A key component in the strategic problem of implementing a better success rate was to have more individualized attention per client. This entailed adding additional staff, which would be beneficial to the external stakeholders, particularly the clients. In regards to the internal stakeholders a better success rate would not only increase measureable outcomes but would make this project worth the investment.

Productivity

Productivity in the non-profit agency has to do with providing essential services and the success rate and beneficial outcomes of the participants. For the YWCA THP, productivity does not mean what the bottom line is in terms of cost and profits in the monetary sense. It is often a daily struggle to do more with less. To paraphrase Nafziger (2013) he says, “but finding the most beneficial way to maintain and cultivate relationships with constituents such as donors and volunteers is also of critically utmost importance,” (Nafziger, 2013).

To increase productivity would be to look at several factors including how to increase the volunteer base, rise additional funding including donations and/or sponsorships and make the employees understand their stake in the agency in providing better services for the participants.

For the case manager productivity means helping the participants meet their needs. One of the ways to increase the productivity is to be able to assist the women in accessing “the number of important programs available to them to address their health and social service needs.” “The ability of homeless women to overcome such administrative and geographic barriers is diminished by the daily challenges they face in acquiring food, shelter, and other forms of basic subsistence for themselves and if they have them, for their children,” (Heslin, Anderson, Gelberg. 2001).

YWCA Southeast Wisconsin

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) incorporated as a national organization in 1907 in the state of New York, but it had existed in other forms from as early as the 1850's. The current organization traces its roots back to two groups in England. The Prayer Union was a group founded by Emma Roberts in 1855. This changed its name within its first four years to the Young Women's Christian Association. The information in this section comes from YWCA of the U.S.A.-Company History unless otherwise cited.

The YWCA worked on various fronts in the early 20th century. Though the YWCA was now under a single national umbrella, it remained a decentralized group. By the 1920's, there were at least 40 YWCA training schools in urban areas across the country.

By 1992, the YWCA had 400 local associations, which worked out of more than 4,000 sites. The group had grown to become the number one nonprofit provider of shelter services for women and families in the United States. Whereas its early residences had mostly housed young working women, the group increasingly cared for homeless women and victims of domestic violence.

In 1999, the YWCA vowed to revitalize itself for the coming new century. The national group wanted to improve its customer relations and restructure its management.

The YWCA of the USA was a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls. The organization was headquartered in New York, and it operated through over 300 local YWCAs, that were founded in urban and rural areas across the country.

The YWCA of the U.S.A. was the nation's largest nonprofit provider of child cares. Its daycare and after-school care programs served over 750,000 children annually. The organization was also the nation's largest provider of shelter services for women and children.

The YWCA also provided employment training and placement agencies through its local branches.

Besides childcare, housing and shelter, and economic empowerment, the YWCA is concerned with five other key issues. The issues were as follows: health and fitness, leadership development, racial justice and human rights, violence prevention and global awareness.

The YWCA of Greater Milwaukee served Milwaukee community since 1892. The comprehensive services helped to remove barriers, build prosperity and secure resources for more than 15,000 individuals served each year, ("YWCA Southeast Wisconsin: Our History" 2012). One of the programs that are offered was the transitional housing program.

The YWCA Transitional Housing Program (THP) was established in 1988. It was established in response to the rising number of homeless families in Milwaukee. The YWCA THP served an average of 35 families annually through the program. By providing homeless women and their children with supportive services and case management, families were able to achieve stability and economic self-sufficiency, ("YWCA Southeast Wisconsin: Transitional Housing Program" 2012). The program manager of the YWCA THP, Marva Johnson, reported that the first initial resident became homeless and in need have shelter after leaving a domestic violence relationships and needed a safe haven for herself and her children.

The YWCA's mission is as follows: "***The YWCA of Greater Milwaukee is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.***" The vision statement read as follows: "***Fueling women's aspirations and opening pathways to racial justice,***" ("YWCA Southeast Wisconsin: Mission & Vision" 2012).

The mission statement and vision statement of the YWCA of Greater Milwaukee is able to encompass and clearly defined its core concepts such as its purpose, values, beliefs and

standards (Carpenter, Sanders, 2007). Its purpose was explained in the words of eliminating racism, and empowering women. The values were stated in promoting, peace, justice freedom and dignity for all and its vision statement summarized its standard by the words, “fueling women’s aspiration and opening pathways to racial justice,” (“YWCA Southeast Wisconsin: Mission & Vision” 2012).

In keeping with its mission and incorporating the mission statement the agency strived to eliminate racism and empower women through its supportive services, affordable housing, workforce development and racial justice programming. (“YWCA Southeast Wisconsin: Who We Are” 2012).

In addition, in order to accomplish the organization’s mission the YWCA offered programs that focused on achieving the following goals:

- Moving low-income individuals towards self-sufficiency,
- Providing supportive services for women and their families;
- Furthering individual education through coursework and connections to higher education opportunities.
- Promoting girls leadership and development.
- Helping women become a stronger force in business,
- Political and community forums and addressing the issue of cultural diversity and racism in our community, (“YWCA Southeast

Wisconsin: Who We Are” 2012).

Case Management

“Case management is an essential role in the human services field and involves several processes, including: assessing, planning, implementing, coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating. Like many fields in the public and human service industries, case management focuses on the needs of individuals. It is not a profession per se, but instead an area of practice within a specific profession. Case management is utilized in several fields of human services such as mental health, substance abuse, disability services, and many others,” (“The national association," 2013).

THP’s target population is homeless women and their children and that in itself has very specific characteristics in which the case manager must be aware of. Case managers must take into account the “magnitude and complexity of the clientele’s needs, combined with the possible lack of available resources in the community,” (Mercier, Racine, 1995).

THP case manager’s role is to assist the resident and the primary responsibilities consisted of the following: assisted resident’s in obtaining their goals; advocated, coached, supported and protected the residents. The case manager responsibilities also include being the liaison between residents and various agencies to assist in finding resolution to problems and a resource and referral source. The case manager reports directly to the program manager as her primary supervisor. Consultations are also done with the program manager and W-2 executive in regards to the clients and program functions.

Case managers, in working with the participants, administer formal assessments on supportive service needs. In looking at a model format for case manager services one of the key components is to develop and maintain the highest level of cooperative working relationships with the community resource agencies and organizations.

The case manager is focused on choosing an individualized plan for each participant. Although they all have one of the same common barriers, which is homelessness, the participants can often be on different levels and have difference experience in that a blanket format cannot always be used when developing a structured plan for the participants.

The primary role for the case manager in assisting participants when it comes to the transitional housing program is assist the participants in development of a client plan based on assessment results that includes attainable and measurable short and long-term outcome objectives. A key component is also to identify and arrange services with other service providers to provide optional services that are not provided by the YWCA THP for the participants and their children.

In assessing strategically how to be more effective as a case manager in working with the participants it would be to make the process of seeking benefits and maneuvering through the “eligibility criteria and application” process more seamless (Heslin, Andersen, Gelberg, 2003). In addition, implementing more assertive forms of outreach would be necessary “to link this population to case managers and a broader range of services,” (Heslin, Andersen, Gelberg, 2003).

Counseling

The homeless population as a whole has a unique set of barriers or obstacles that often have them in this plight. We are examining a specific group which is single women and their children. It has been noted that along with the basic need of housing being needed there is contributing factors that makes it more difficult for them to sustain permanent and stable housing.

Some of the contributing factors can be mental health, alcohol and drug issues (AODA), stress, and generational indicators based on previous family history. It is not possible to address the homeless problem without dealing with the underlying barriers that can exasperate the situation.

Homeless women report greater stress levels than men and may significantly benefit from a stress management group,” (Faith, 2009). THP provides Creating Hopeful Aspirations, Nurturing, Growing, Evolving and Stress Classes (C.H.A.N.G.E./Stress Classes) for the participants. This group is a safe, friendly and healthy setting where a group facilitator will nurture positive change. Hopefulness, creativity and positive aspirations are encourages and goal oriented problem solving will be experienced. It is expected that leadership and self-empowerment will evolve in the lives of the participants. The children ages 7-12 years will also participate in a play therapy sessions. This will allow them to comprehend the changes going on in their lives and they will hopefully learn to cope in their environment and develop strategies.

When entering the program each participant is required to complete a mental health and AODA assessment which is completed by a psychotherapist, MSW. Because the basic need of shelter is not being met the underlying mental health, and AODA treated is not diagnosed or treated because it is a secondary concern for the participants. Some participants are unaware or have difficulties to navigating the system they are unable to get the proper counseling services that they may need.

THP also takes into account the victimization aspect when dealing with the participants. The following issues in relations to counseling also have to be taken into consideration: to paraphrase “Measures of victimization assessed multiple dimensions of this construct were measured, including criminal victimization, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse. There were also measures of current daily environmental hassles and quality of family environment while growing up also included. Additional measures Assessed positive and negative interpersonal exchanges, sense of coherence, and overall psychological distress were also measured,” (Ingram, Corning, Schmidt, 1996).

For the overall wellbeing of the participant and their family in a holistic aspect determining what the counseling needs may be must be evaluated and services provided. The strategic plan for this area would be to assess needed services for counseling for the participants in a more expedient fashion and to be able to determine any other underlying conditions where additional counseling services are needed.

Chapter 3

Conclusions and Implications

The YWCA Transitional Housing Program provides temporary housing and supportive services to women and their children experiencing homelessness throughout Milwaukee County. Averages of 32 families are served by the program each year. The way the programming stood, the primary methods of engagement on these issues provided services to the participants and educating the public through events and materials.

The success of these efforts were limited by policies that determined the funding level, regulated the types of services provided and shaped the community opportunities available to the program. There are numerous potential opportunities for the YWCA THP although it is clear that many of these opportunities would emerge if involvement is deftly executed. It would be refreshing to our program participants to see that the agency strived for systematic change.

In planning it was important to realize that additional staffing would be needed. The key questions to this would be what services would be prioritizing and most importantly would there be funding available to make this increase and would it be financially sustainable. It is apparent that the need is not only there but in all likelihood will increase. Although corporations and other interests with significant resources were well-represented in the policy process of THP, seldom were the concerns and needs of the low-income participants brought forth by professional, experienced advocates.

In deciding how to move forward the bigger picture would be what strategic move would be in the best interest of the participant. The move would have to be made to increase effective case management services to the participants, improve individualized attention, and look into swifter

outreach responses to deal with participants at the initial level. This would make for not only better outcomes for the agency but for the overall stability of the participants.

In many respects a more efficient and effective run THP would give the YWCA an opportunity to be a voice for the voiceless.

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