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State of the Families Report

Summer 2015

Drought Impact - Huron

- Three take-aways:
 1. No new problems; only consequences of old problems writ large.
 1. With full employment, these issues lessen in urgency and impact. Our growers need the water and we need the jobs.
 1. The leadership of Huron's education, government, medical, and nonprofit CBO's have formed a coalition to eliminate childhood poverty. This encompasses infrastructure development and rural economic development. We need your support.

Baseline Statistics

Poverty

- Huron is #1 most impoverished, incorporated city in California
- 46.4% of it's 7,000 people live in poverty
- Generational poverty; median income: \$13,000
- 50%+ unemployment
- 96.6% Mexican-American agricultural workers
- 97.8% speak Spanish at home
- One bank; no pharmacy; limited small business
- New immigration trend of tribal people from the mountains of Southern Mexico and Guatemala: these Mexic-Amerindians do not speak Spanish.

Violence

- The Police Department is underfunded.
- Those who come forward to report crime cannot be protected by the Police.
- 80% of Police Calls respond to violence in the home
- Child neglect is common
- Child witness of violence is common
- Drugs and gangs are here
- Casual violence is tolerated* by the people, i.e. children fighting on the way home from school; new immigrants from tribal communities regularly robbed and beaten by teens and young adults

*People feel that they have no choice. That there is nothing they can do about the violence. Hopelessness and fatalism are the real enemy.

Drought Impact

- Huron is a resilient community.
- The people of Huron are 'drought tolerant.'
- The view from inside is that things are slightly more uncomfortable, but manageable. This is how the people see it, not how Huron's leadership sees it.
- This complacency stems from three roots:
 - Lack of capacity to imagine a future different from what is being lived today
 - In a life of continuous struggle, of extreme poverty, and ubiquitous violence, one keeps one's head down and moves from crisis to crisis
 - Expectations for self, for community, and effective, genuine concern from 'outsiders,' and the nation are very low

Our Agency

Westside Family Preservation Services Network

- We are the only 501 c 3 organization headquartered in Huron.
- We operate a Neighborhood Resource Center; our budget is \$300K/yr. with a staff of four. In 2014 we delivered more than 20,000 services to 1,500 unduplicated families.
- We have been working with the families of the Greater Huron area for 15 years.
- Our Theory of Change focuses on eliminating child neglect and abuse.
- We are the backbone agency for a newly formed collaboration of Huron leadership focused on eliminating childhood poverty.
- Used to provide emergency food distribution once a month. In August 2015 we did five. That fed 1,300 families an estimated 6,500 meals.
- We served more than 30 families a day in our walk-in center; made home visits to high-risk families; taught Parenting Classes and Victims of Violence Classes; handed out backpacks in a community event; and worked to implement a client tracking and program evaluation database.
- The requests for services is greater than we can respond to effectively.
- We are not sustainable in terms of our funding and financial support.

Drought Impact

- Because of the existence of the ‘Social Safety Net,’ it is the most vulnerable people of Huron who are affected the most by the drought:
 - The very young
 - The old
 - The disabled, especially, developmentally disabled children
 - The dispossessed: homeless, jobless, rootless, addicted, mentally ill, and sick (who are mainly injured migrant workers)

Drought Impact: The Very Young

Investing in Children is essential for improving economic stability and growth.

- 2,500 children in Huron. 800 younger than 5.
- 320 very young children experience childhood poverty, and an additional 680 older children live in poverty.
- No Early Head Start in Huron; no School Age Child Care Program; no integrated partnerships with medical and mental health care providers to test very young children for developmental disabilities and secure the necessary services; no quality Pre-K or High School.
- There are two Head Start Programs in Huron: 120 slots.
- 75% of children do not complete their education.
- 85% cannot read at basic level by the end of 3rd Grade.

When there is no water, how much attention goes to children who cannot read?

The drought is teaching us that we need to develop bilateral attention spans, e.g. Drought+.

We cannot continue to address issues in their respective silos.

We have to address infrastructure in a systemic and systematic way, meaning: interdependencies, priorities, and unanticipated consequences.

We are implementing an integrated, collaborative approach that utilizes evidence-based Solutions with data systems that hold us all accountable for our work.