

The Founders Tale

Lena Miller- My family moved to Bayview Hunters Point when I was two years old. I grew up in a very close-knit, working class, primarily African-American neighborhood, where children played kickball in the streets and neighbors looked out for each others children and watched over each others houses when they went out of town. I attended Dr. Martin Luther King child development center, located at the top of Hunters Point, from 2-8 years old. Most of my childhood friends lived in the surrounding subsidized and public housing communities. While there was more poverty in these areas of the community, the general sense of interconnectedness was perhaps even stronger within the public housing communities. Everyone knew their neighbors and many of the people were related through blood, marriage, a shared family member, or just long shared family histories so that they began to regard themselves as family. While Bayview Hunters Point was never Mayberry, there was an extremely powerful collective culture, shared sense of identity, and sense of extended family that made the community unique and gave people great pride in being from Bayview Hunters Point.

In the 1980s everything changed. The crack epidemic - fueled by more money than anyone had ever seen – and automatic machine guns, hit San Francisco. Bayview Hunters Point, like every other urban African American community across the country, was devastated. It was like an invisible atom bomb, that specifically targetted family structure and stability, had exploded in the middle of the community. Everything changed. The drug trade brought masses of people to a new low. Mothers chose crack over their children; getting high throughout pregnancies, selling the family's food, clothes, furniture, and valuable possessions for crack. Homes were turned into crack houses, exposing too many children to negligence and abuse while their parents lay in the next room getting high. Drug king pins, intermediate level dealers, and street corner crack dealers sprang up, almost overnight, like weeds after a good rain. Money was plentiful in the drug trade. In almost every neighborhood, a millionaire had emerged from the crack trade. It was not unusual for young men, as young as 12 and 13 years old to be driving around in nice cars with \$5,000 paint jobs and music. As dealers began to carry guns to protect their large caches of cash, a proliferation of high-powered rifles became commonplace throughout the neighborhood. Soon different neighborhoods came into conflict and people began to use that high powered weaponry for drive-bys and assassination attempts. Everything changed.

The 1980s was a significant time in my life as these were my pre-teen and high school years. This was also a time when my family's stability was undergoing great destruction; so I frequently sought an escape from the negativity in my home by going to friends' houses. Often I would leave home at 6 am for school, go directly to a friend's house after school only to return home late at night. On weekends i practically lived with my childhood friend who lived in the Oakdale projects. The mothers or grandmothers in the nearby homes cooked and shared freely, a bed was always left open for me and I was made to feel like part of the family, giving me a much needed feeling of connectedness. These refuges saved my life. But even this oasis became tarnished when crack infested it. My childhood friend's mother, a strong Police woman who looked like the movie Superhero, Coffee Brown, became a hard-core crack addict and her life and her family's life went spiraling downward. By the time I began attending high school, it seemed that the whole neighborhood had succumbed to the grip of the crack epidemic. I lost friends and neighbors to drug and turf related homicides, once every two weeks. The pain and devastation of the neighborhood was palpable. I was determined to go out into the world to find the 'medicine' to heal my community.

I went to college and studied urban policy, social work and politics, while majoring in Psychology. My first job in the 'social work' field was as an Academic Tutor at the San Francisco Senators, a non-profit organization, started by Dr. William Marquis. I worked in the Special Education department of McAteer High School, the school where most of the youth from Hunters Point attended. I was quickly promoted to Executive Assistant; then Mr. Marquis asked me to join the Board of Directors. This is where I got my first real education about the non-profit business.

After graduating from UC Berkeley, I got a job at Edgewood group home. Edgewood was a large orphanage, established in the 1800s. Now it housed some of the most severely emotionally disturbed youth in the child welfare system. I worked in the residential house with the highest level of emotionally disturbed children. Later I went to work at the San Francisco Boys and Girls Home for youth ages 12-18. Most of these youth were also severely emotionally disturbed referrals from the Child Welfare system and the Juvenile Probation Department. At the group home, I was impressed by the enrichment activities for the children, the full refrigerators stocked with healthy food, and the commitment to ensuring youth were attending school, had regular doctors appointments, and social service appointments. However, a sense of isolation, abandonment, and stigma was consistent amongst almost all the children. No matter how good the services, the children were still 'group home' kids. The implication was that they were unwanted and unloved because they had been removed from their families.

During my second year in graduate school at SF State University's School of Social Work, I began to develop the GIRLS 2000 program with the support of my mentor Dr. Marquis, under the auspices of the San Francisco Senators. GIRLS 2000 was the result of my long journey in search of the 'medicine' to heal my sick community. I combined my first hand experiences with the ravages of crack, the pain of family dysfunction, the effective pieces of social service caregivers, and my memory of the strength and beauty of my community to create an antibody to the virus that was eating away at the young people and families of Bayview Hunters Point.

"The model for GIRLS 2000 was to mix my childhood experiences and my group home days. I tried to create a place for young people to go who have a lot of crazy stuff going on at home. It was a safe place to go where they felt loved and had a connection with people. And particularly because of the times; the problems had changed. So it was a time where the kids weren't getting basic parenting. No one felt like a 'group home kid'. I was trying to make the program hip. Something that they could be proud of and want to be a part of. So it's not about someone not loving you and sending you away, but close to home we started a family. No one was there because they were identified or stigmatized as being dysfunctional. It was a celebration of pride in the community and taking what was beautiful in the community. So much stuff that was going on was about degrading the spirit. So our program was about uplifting."

During my last year in graduate school, I was interned in the Human Rights Commission and upon graduation was hired at the Mayor's Office as a Special Assistant to then Mayor Willie Brown. GIRLS 2000 was in its embryonic stages. The program was housed in a single room at the Milton Meyer Rec Center and had only 5 participants. I enlisted my friends to help facilitate classes and volunteer on the Board of Directors. I did all of the Case Management and other supportive services. Although

GIRLS 2000 was my first love, I had a toddler and soon found out that I was pregnant with my second child, so I had to maintain a full-time job. I worked at the Mayor's Office by day, then would go to GIRLS 2000 and worked until the program closed at 9. When the program got its first grant from the San Francisco Foundation, followed by the Goldman Fund, I hired a Program Director to ensure the program was running smoothly. Within a year, GIRLS 2000's enrollment had increased to over 30 girls and had outgrown the space.

Takai Tyler- I grew up in a small, tight-knit Black community outside a military base in the predominately White town of Cheyenne, Wyoming. The eighth of eleven children, my family was poor financially, but because of my mother's attitude and the manner in which I was raised, I felt buffered from any significant sense of want or lacking. Despite his struggle with alcoholism, my father was a community activist and my mother had strong religious beliefs, so our house was a place where people from in and outside of the community could come to meet and organize or for shelter. My mother would feed homeless transients that came through the town on railcars if they were hungry, clothe them and give them a place to rest. Her philosophy was that God would provide a way, so she would share the little she had with those who had even less. Watching the unselfish generosity of my mother and political work of my father (and older brothers) instilled a sense of responsibility and faith for caring for my community in me. These lessons were further ingrained in church. The church was the hub of the Black community, most of whom were southern families connected to the military base. It was the primary place of contact for community members, all of whom had long-term close knit relationships with one another. This church helped compensate for the poverty and other challenges that we had at home. The church functioned as the hub for social services of the community. Members cared for/adopted each other's children when a parent was unable, assisted in crisis, counseled members with drug/alcohol issues, provided housing for 'homeless' families, and fed and clothed each other; all through an informal, reciprocal system of care unconnected to the 'official' welfare system.

"The church where I grew up was like this small building where there was all this love when you walked in the door. The adults made you know that they were happy to see you...and that's what I told staff about the GIRLS 2000 program – I don't care how your day has been or what a girl may have said to you to make you angry...when she walks in the door you better make her feel like she is important and that you are really glad to see her. I wanted to create a program where all the kids came and got all of this love and knew that the staff was going to give them attention. Just like this grandmotherly type woman that I had growing up who baked us cookies and we would go to her house and she always made us feel loved. So I wanted to make the girls at GIRLS 2000 feel like there was always someone who had their back and who loved them. I wanted them to have a sense of family."

I grew up during the late civil-rights era and the closeness of the Black community helped insulate me from the sometimes harsh, racist climate in Wyoming. My community provided refuge and a positive alternate view of myself as a Black female youth. Because my family was politically active, I was aware of the struggles in the community and other Black communities across the United States. I witnessed the impact of the social activism of my family and other community members. My father was the Chairman of the local Community Action Council which worked to oppose many elements of the federal Model City/urban renewal program that was an early form of "gentrification". The urban renewal program ultimately deconstructed the mostly Black and Chicano childhood neighborhood and weakened the cohesiveness of the community. As a teenager, I was a member of the Youth Community Action board and worked with other young people to ensure there was a youth voice in city decisions related to allocations of resources, workforce readiness and civic activities. I grew up with a strong sense of wanting to dedicate my life to working in communities and struggling for positive change.

After graduating from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota with a degree in Sociology I moved to the Bay Area. It was the 1980's during the height of the 'crack epidemic' in Bayview Hunters Point. My first job in the Bay was working with children in a battered women's shelter. Having grown up in a family with domestic violence, I wanted and needed to empower these children and build their resilience to deal with the instability in their lives. I later became Director of a program for formerly abused women and their children that provided long term housing, social supports and focused on the leadership development and community-building of the mothers. Later I went to work for a private foster care agency that primarily served teenagers from Bayview Hunters Point. I became involved with the Black Social Workers Association whose focus of work at that time was to stop the placement of Black children in White foster homes outside the Bay Area. I became very familiar with Bayview Hunters Point because the agency recruited African-American families from Bayview and thus the majority of the youth were placed in non-relative foster homes outside of their community. Though I loved working with the youth I was becoming more and more disturbed at the number of African-American families that were being unnecessarily damaged by the Child Welfare system. There seemed to be an unspoken system that supported the racially-biased removal of Black children, the inadequate foster care placements and the long-term negative impact to the youth, their families and the Bayview Hunters Point community. Additionally, when the youth aged out of the system, I noticed that they returned back to their families, but without having any assistance in dealing with reasons for the disruption, and without any support to reconnect with their families; so the destructive cycle only worsened. There had to be a more innovative approach to working with troubled families that would leave the children in the home and build supports around them. While I remained deeply committed to the children, the job began to erode my faith in the system. It seemed that the system was intent ultimately on destroying Black families.

I was in the middle of earning my Masters Degree in Social Work at San Francisco State University when I heard about a job at GIRLS 2000. I was excited because this job seemed to encapsulate all of the things that I loved about the work- empowering Black youth and their families from Bayview Hunters Point, without the demoralizing drawbacks of working within the system. Although the job paid significantly less money than I was making at the foster care agency, I took the job, and became the Case Manager at GIRLS 2000. When I started, GIRLS 2000 had only been open for a year. Because it was such a small, new program, there was a lot of flexibility, and I was encouraged to be create and develop not only programming for the girls, but also the overall infrastructure of the agency. After three months, the Program Director left abruptly when she received a better paying job offer, closer to her home, so I became the Program Director. This really allowed me to dig in and develop the program according to the needs of the youth that were served.

At this point, Lena was on the Board and attended field trips and activities, but she had stepped back from programming as she had another job and a new baby on the way. She entrusted me to run GIRLS 2000, and I took this task to heart. Lena's vision for the program of treating the children as you would your own; was in alignment with my own vision and philosophy for working with youth.

"It was amazing- it was like Lena and I were organically doing the same things even though we didn't talk often."

This began a long partnership that would span over a decade, to the present, of Executive Leadership that has grown and cultivated the GIRLS 2000 program, into what would become the Hunters Point Family agency, based on the principles of family, love, and resurrecting the strength of the Black community in Bayview Hunters Point.

Setting the Context

Hunters Point Back in the Day: Since the early 1900's Bayview Hunters Point was primarily populated by Italian American and Maltese immigrants. Today Bayview Hunters Point area is the home of 85% of the city's African American population and is one of the last remaining African American community in San Francisco. African Americans migrated to this neighborhood from Louisiana, Texas, and other Southern states to work in the Hunters Point naval shipyards during World War II. Prior to World War II, San Francisco's black population did not exceed five thousand residents.¹ As a result of the large migration of African Americans to San Francisco, the African American population became the largest non-white population in the City, comprising over half of the minority population. [when?]

During the war and up to the closing of the shipyards, San Francisco's African American community was primarily working to middle class. When many of these new immigrants arrived in San Francisco to work in the shipyards, they settled into the living quarters that were hastily constructed to house shipyard workers. Because the shipyards offered relatively well paying employment, most of the families were eventually able to purchase homes in the surrounding Bayview and other San Francisco communities. African Americans opened business on the hill and throughout Bayview Hunters Point. Families would fill the parks and picnic on a sunny day. Fathers were the primary earners of the family unit and the majority lived in the home and raised their children. A tight-knit, stable, and relatively self-sufficient community was developed, as many of the residents were family and/or neighbors in their home states.

Upon the massive closing of the shipyards, at the end of the war, many of the area's working-class families became unemployed and were not able to re-gain viable employment. Although, San Francisco didn't have the Jim Crow laws of many southern and Midwestern states, the City resembled many places in the ways that there were restricted employment opportunities available to African Americans. Most of the trade unions and the skilled trades barred African Americans so they were confined to service occupations or menial labor. Thus, African Americans were sorely underrepresented in the professions, skilled trades, and in white collar and managerial jobs.² Just two years after the war, unemployment rates in Bayview Hunters Point skyrocketed to 30%. Thus began the decline in quality-of-life for families in this area and a soaring rate of poverty. The living quarters for former shipyard workers were converted to public housing residences and they are now known as the Harbor Road, Westpoint, and Oakdale public housing projects.

Although the 1970's were marked by growing poverty in Bayview Hunters Point, the civil rights movement and Black Pride were strong in the community. Bayview Hunters Point was a breeding ground of urban African American politics, style, and swagger that developed into a unique culture that infused the community with pride and a sense of belonging and connection.

The 1980's marked the beginning of the end of this powerful community. The era of crack and semi-automatic machine guns decimated the community in the span of less than 5 years. Many residents who had achieved well-paying stable jobs and even menial jobs became addicted or affected by the

¹ Broussard, Albert. "San Francisco as a Model for the Black Urban West"

² Ibid

onslaught of addiction to crack cocaine. People lost their jobs because they would disappear for days on crack binges, families began losing their homes because they would spend their mortgage money on crack, parents abandoned and abused their children, children learned to distrust and despise the adults who had abandoned all self-respect for the drug, drug dealers became the neighborhood's upper class and heroes, and owning a gun became the norm. Bayview Hunters Point, like so many other urban African American communities was being destroyed and degraded. By the 1990's the full affects of crack had emerged. Babies prenatally exposed to crack were being born with neurological issues, chronic unemployment had settled into families, fathers seldom remained in the home with their children, many of the men had become involved with the criminal justice system, and homicide became the norm for settling differences. During 1990's 45% of African Americans left San Francisco in search of cheaper and a more peaceful environment.³

These changes are reflected in the alarming statistics for this community. According to the 2000 U.S. Census report, Bayview Hunters Point's population is approximately 50% African American (compared to 7.6% citywide), 27.6% Pacific Islander, 16.7% Latina/Hispanic, 5.4% White and .3% Native American. It has one of the highest poverty rates in San Francisco, with 30% of families earning less than \$10,000 per year, and a median household income of \$29,640 annually, as compared to \$65,000 for white San Franciscans and a \$55,221 average citywide. An overwhelming 72% of the African Americans in Bayview Hunters Point have incomes below the federal poverty level.

In 2005, The San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development produced a report that showed that Bayview Hunters Point has one of the highest percentages of children in the city: 30.0% as compared to the citywide average of 16.7%, and one of the lowest levels of educational attainment with 36.6% of its resident having no high-school diploma as compared to 18.8% citywide and only 11.6% having a Bachelors Degree as compared to 45.0% citywide. Although African Americans comprise only 11% of the children's population, they represent over 70% of the children in foster care. Today, 14% of all African American children in San Francisco are in foster care. In 2003, over 500 African American boys [what ages?] were arrested and placed in juvenile detention; although, there were only 1023 African American boys between the ages of 15-17 living in San Francisco.

From 1990 to 2000, there was a 23% decrease in the number of African Americans living in San Francisco. For many African American families, living in the City has become a dangerous and destructive place to raise families. The schools are failing, children are being removed from their homes and arrested at alarming rates, and the homicide rate in Bayview Hunters Point is among the highest in the nation. Many working and middle class families moved to the surrounding suburbs in the Bay Area, including: Oakland, Antioch, Hercules, Fairfield and Suisun, where schools are better, neighborhoods are safer, and homes are more affordable (Clark, 2007; Massey, Gross, Shibuya 1994).

In 2005 and 2007, the San Francisco City Survey included the question, "How likely are you to move away from San Francisco in the next three years?" Of 350 African American survey respondents across the two surveys, 36% indicated that they were very likely or somewhat likely to leave San

³ San Francisco Human Services Agency. The 7 Key Corners for At Risk Families in San Francisco. April 2005

Francisco within three years. In an analysis controlling for factors such as age, education, and income, African Americans were twice as likely as Whites to say that they were likely to leave San Francisco within three years.

Hunters Point when GIRLS 2000 Started: The Hunters Point Family's seminal program GIRLS 2000 was founded in 1998. The Bayview Hunters Point community was still suffering the aftershocks of the 80's crack epidemic. Although many people were coming out of their addictions, the family structures had been left in shambles. Many older residents died and left their homes to their children who did not maintain the payments and soon lost them to foreclosure or sold them. The majority of these homes were purchased by Asians and Latin American immigrants as Bayview was one of the only relatively affordable places to buy a home in San Francisco. This time was the first wave of gentrification of this community.

In addition to losing property, many families had also lost their children. General Hospital had a policy of doing toxicology screens for newborn babies and those who were found with drugs in their system were reported to Child Protective Services. This and other factors resulted in many children being removed from their homes and placed in foster care. During this time, the Bayview Hunters Point community had more children in foster care than any other place in the country. There was also a major shift in the community's understanding and familiarity with the term "crack baby." Like AIDS was in the gay community, what was once almost taboo or atypical had become the norm. Everyone knew or was related to a "crack baby" and they were coming of age so that people were becoming more aware of the effects of the drug on babies and children. While some children displayed serious cognitive and development delays, the majority seemed to be relatively normal, only with very short attention spans and other symptoms that resembled what is today known as "Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder." Perhaps the most damaging affect on these children was not necessarily the prenatal exposure to the drug, but the overexposure to drug addict behaviors and drug influenced home environments. Many children had witnessed their mothers prostituting themselves or doing other degrading things to get the drugs. A lack of discipline and structure pervaded these childrens' home lives and a distrust and disdain for adults grew within the hearts of many of these children. Even when their parents stopped using drugs and became clean/sober, many still hesitated to chastise or set boundaries for their children, as they were overwhelmed with guilt and shame for their behaviors during their addiction. While some young people were drawn to selling drugs for the promise of quick money and prestige, most young men reported that they began selling drugs to prevent their mothers from buying it on the streets where they would be subject to constant degradation; and the young person would be humiliated by taunts from other young men about what their mother had done to get drugs from them. By supplying their mothers with drugs they could at least prevent her from being abused in the streets; however, this often created another dynamic where the child/parent relationship was skewed and where their mothers or other family members with addictions would manipulate and steal from them. All of these dysfunctional dynamics soon ate away at the social fabric of the community. People would talk about this new generation as lacking respect and being out of control. Community members became scared of the young people and would no longer even attempt to correct them or provide guidance when they saw them engaging in destructive behaviors. The young people, many of whom where drug dealers or involved in the street life took control of the neighborhoods and many residents began to feel unsafe.

While the crack epidemic had mostly passed in the late 90's, drug dealing was still the norm for many young men living in and around public housing in Bayview Hunters Point, however there was no longer the abundance of money as in the 1980's. The majority of "crack heads" that were still around had lost their jobs long ago and were hustling for small rocks to maintain their addiction. The average drug dealer was making less than minimum wage, maybe less if one calculates the amount of time spent in jail and fighting court cases. The era of fancy cars, clothes, and stacks of cash was over. Money was scarce and most drug dealers couldn't even afford a car. Those who could usually had what became known as a "bucket." An older model Japanese car that didn't look like much but was relatively reliable. The flash and the glitz of the crack heyday was over and there was nothing but destruction in its wake. No one had any illusions of getting rich by selling drugs and most who had never tried it were afraid of it, as they had seen what it did to those of the generation before them. The community now became acclimated to an atmosphere of loss, hopelessness, and despair. Many of the children ceased to dream and many of the adults lost hope for them. This was the stage that was set for the birth of the GIRLS 2000 program.

GIRLS 2000 was founded on the belief that these children were our greatest hope and the future of a new generation of strength and beauty would emerge. From the ashes rises the phoenix. Within these children who had suffered so much and witnessed the dehumanization of the closest and dearest people in their lives, would emerge the 'medicine' to restore the beauty and strength of their community as their understanding of the human condition would be deeper and more profound than the average child. These were in fact the 'indigo' children that new-age authors began to write about, who were born with a spiritual knowing and understanding unlike the humans who had gone before them. Our job at GIRLS 2000 was to love and nurture them, so that they could move past the pain and the personal story of failure and disappointment to embrace their higher purpose. This belief system was embraced by the children of the neighborhood and their families. GIRLS 2000's membership grew so fast that the program quickly outgrew its original space. The girls flocked to the program everyday to receive their daily dose of love and inspiration. The parents embraced the program and the staff not only because they appreciated what it was doing for their child, but because they didn't feel threatened or judged. The program maintained a philosophy of partnership with the parents as opposed to replacing them or making them feel guilty for whatever they couldn't do for their child. This model helped to prevent the removal of many children from their homes. Even if a parent was struggling with addiction, we would partner with the parents and families to ensure that all of the core needs of the child would be met, including: school meetings, doctors appointments, meals, enrichment activities, help with homework, etc. Soon the boys began protesting that they could not join GIRLS 2000. Everyone wanted to be a part of the program; everyone wanted to come get a daily dose of that medicine - unconditional love and acceptance tempered with structure, support, and appropriate boundaries.

Hunters Point Today: In 2010, Bayview has changed drastically. The wear and tear of the past weighing on the spirit and psyche of the community has left it deeply damaged. It is ironic that this level of devastation has occurred in San Francisco, the cutting-edge, liberal bastion of the United States. Bayview Hunters Point has some of the most alarming statistics and health indicators in the country.

- Today, there are two Superfund sites along with 325 other *toxic sites* located within BVHP.

- The water that surrounds BVHP is contaminated by radioactive waste as a result of sandblasting the ships that carried the atomic bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- BVHP is home to the City sewer, the City dump, and until 2008, the City's PG&E Power Plant.
- African American women living in BVHP have breast and cervical cancer rates that are twice the average rates of women living in any of the nine counties that surround San Francisco and are amongst the highest in the country.
- African Americans in San Francisco have the highest rates of ischemic heart disease and stroke, overall highest rates of all types of cancer, the highest rates of Type 2 diabetes (13.6%) as compared to an average of 3.1% in San Francisco and 5.3% average in California. They have the highest rates of obesity (28.1%) and overweight (34.6%) as compared to a city-wide average of 11.9% for obesity and 28.4% overweight.
- BVHP ranks highest among San Francisco neighborhoods in the rate of ambulatory hospitalizations for adult uncontrolled diabetes and adult congestive heart failure. The area also accounts for a disproportionate share of the city's deaths from hypertension/heart disease.
- BVHP has the highest percentage of teen births at 36.7% as compared to a city wide rate of 23.4%.
- BVHP has the highest percentage of low-birth weight in San Francisco at 16.3% as compared to 7.4% citywide and an average of 6.3% statewide in California.
- African American women living in Bayview Hunters Point are two to four times more likely to give birth to infants with serious birth defects.
- In general, life expectancy of African Americans is the lowest among all ethnicities in San Francisco, with African American males' life expectancy at 62.5 years and women at 74.3 years as compared to an average of 74.3 years for males and 82.2 years for females for the entire population of San Francisco.
- BVHP has the lowest levels of educational attainment with 36.6% of its resident having no high-school diploma as compared to 18.8% citywide and only 11.6% having a Bachelors Degree as compared to 45.0% citywide.
- BVHP has the highest unemployment rates (19.2% - which is 4 times the City's average).
- 52.3% of juvenile hall detainees are African Americans and the vast majority of those crimes are economically motivated (robbery, grand theft auto, drug sales, and shoplifting).
- According Juvenile Probation Department's 2007 Annual Report: 17.9% of all juvenile arrests

are BVHP residents, the highest number and percentage of any other district in San Francisco;

- BVHP has the highest infant mortality rates in the United States, rivaling Bulgaria and Jamaica.
- In 2008, 80 percent of homicide victims in San Francisco were shot. Nearly half the victims were black, even though African Americans make up less than 8% of the city's population. African-American men ages 15-24 are at three times the risk of dying by firearms than Latino men in the same age group in San Francisco. Likewise, African-American men ages 15-24 are 7 times more likely to die by firearms than Caucasian or Asian men in the same age group.⁴
- ***The leading cause of death among San Francisco children in BVHP is homicide.*** According to the Trauma Foundation's *Profile of Injury in San Francisco*, "homicide is primarily a problem of the young, as judged by the age of the victims. Young adulthood is a dangerous period for young black San Franciscans." Violence is the leading cause of years of life lost in BVHP, as well as the leading cause for black men in San Francisco.

The Hunters Point Family was founded and developed specifically to address and heal the real impacts and injuries that these statistics have on the children and families of Bayview Hunters Point. While there are stable, healthy, economically sound, educated families in the community, they do not need the services of the Hunters Point Family. The Hunters Point Family serves those children and families who are seeking healing. HPF provides specific outreach to youth living in public and subsidized housing, who are at risk of: becoming victims or perpetrators of homicide and violent crime; arrest and incarceration; sexual exploitation, and premature parenthood. Many of our target youth have experienced prenatal exposure to drugs and alcohol, sexual and/or physical abuse by family members/caretakers; and neglect due to parental substance abuse or diminished mental health. Most of our participants experience multiple risk factors simultaneously. There are no other programs in Bayview Hunters Point that exclusively target these youth. The following statistics demonstrate the complexity of issues our participants are faced with:

- All participants come from low and very low-income households.
- Over 75% of participants are residents of public housing.
- Over 70% of participants are reading at least two grade levels below their own.
- Over 65% of participants have had contact with the juvenile justice system.
- Approximately 50% of program participants' parents have criminal histories.
- Over 70% of participants live with a family member with substance abuse issues.
- At least 35% of participants were born addicted to controlled substances.
- All have a close friend or relative who has been murdered within the last year.

In a recent questionnaire distributed to participants in HPF programs, youth answered questions about violence in their lives and their perceptions of safety in different places. As detailed in the table below, at least two-thirds of the youth have been beaten up/jumped/robbed someone, know someone who has been killed or shot, and/or have been in a physical altercation. Violence surrounds and permeates the lives of these young people to a shocking degree.

⁴ <http://www.surgery.ucsf.edu/sfic/Local.html#Anchor-HOMICIDE-14210>

Percent of kids who have:	
...known someone who has been shot (n=36)	100%
...been involved in a physical altercation (n=37)	84%
...known someone who has been killed (n=34)	
...seen someone being beat up, jumped, or robbed	
...beat up, jumped, or robbed someone	68%
...seen someone get shot (n=36)	53%
...been shot or shot at (n=35)	43%
...been jumped or robbed (n = 37)	42%
...seen someone get killed (n=32)	38%

Although HPF targets young people who are typically described as ‘at-risk’ and ‘high-risk’, we view our participants as high-potential youth whose resilience and ability to thrive despite adversity are among their greatest assets. Each program works to build on the strengths of youth to empower them to develop their full potential. Because many of our youth have experienced consistently harsh realities, they have learned to thrive in the face of enormous obstacles. HPF targets these youth, because within them lies the greatest power for the transcendence, transformation, and transmutation of our entire community.

The Evolution of the Programs

GIRLS 2000: GIRLS 2000 was founded in 1998; however, Lena began working on the program in early 1997 while she was still in graduate school at San Francisco State University in the School of Social Work. Lena was in a proposal writing class and wrote the initial GIRLS 2000 program as an assignment for the class. During that time she was on the Board of the San Francisco Senators program and working closely with Dr. William Marquis. Dr. Marquis had written a program entitled Special Enrichment and Educational Services for Girls, in the late 1970's, that had never been launched. He asked Lena to find a way to launch that program, under the auspices of the San Francisco Senators. Lena transformed the original program to one that would fit the times, context, and needs of high risk girls living in the Bayview Hunters Point public housing community. When the proposal was complete, Dr. Marquis introduced her to representatives at the San Francisco Foundation and the Cowell Foundation to seek funding to support the program. In 1998, the GIRLS 2000 program was launched, with a \$25,000 grant from the San Francisco Foundation. Lena began to seek funds for the program independently, and in early 1998 successfully secured a \$50,000 grant from the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. The program was gaining momentum, she had implemented consistent programming, and got furniture and decorations donated. **In the first year of the program, Lena was a volunteer in between being a parent to an eight month old and her job in the Mayor's Office.** She would take her 8 month old son from day-care and rush to GIRLS 2000 to open the program in the evenings. That routine soon proved to be too taxing, so she used the grant funds to hire a part-time Case Manager.

GIRLS 2000 was doing relatively well and though \$75,000 wasn't a large sum of money, it felt like a fortune to Lena and the kids. The program definitely had legs, they could purchase supplies for activities, a computer, a desk, go on field trips---all of the things a real program does. Unfortunately, the ecstasy was short lived. Two weeks after the check for \$50,000 from the Goldmans came in, her mentor, Dr. Marquis pulled her outside of the program to inform her that funds from the program were needed to float other programs within the agency. The San Francisco Senators had once been one of the most successful non-profit agencies in Bayview Hunters Point. It had successful baseball teams, it owned two large 3 story buildings in Bayview Hunters Point, a fleet of vehicles and a successful tutoring program that was based in the schools. One day Dr. Marquis, an extraordinary man who earned his doctorate in Education after a long stint in the Airforce's parachute division, and a visionary in the community, was hit by a car while he was jogging down Kirkwood Avenue, in front of the Senators headquarters. The car kept going while Dr. Marquis lay on the street, his skull cracked open and brains scattered on the sidewalk. He was never the same after the accident and the Senators' suffered as well. The programs had been losing money and they had a common practice of taking funding from one program that was doing well to support those that were not, leaving all of the programs in an ever-increasing precarious position. When Dr. Marquis said he needed GIRLS 2000's money, but would pay it back soon, fear and sadness came over Lena. She knew she had to quickly move the program and that would also mean ending her relationship with Dr. Marquis and the San Francisco Senators, as he would ultimately see the move as a sign of betrayal.

Lena met with Muhammed Nuru, Executive Director of the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners, one of the most successful job and community development agencies at the time. Nuru reviewed the program and agreed to act as fiscal agency. Dr. Marquis did indeed see the move as an act of

betrayal, but the program would have suffered a still birth under the Senators. Indeed, the Senators closed its doors just two years later as a result of mismanagement of funds.

The program flourished under the administrative support of SLUG. The majority of the program funding was unrestricted foundation funds so the contracts were easy to manage without any major reporting guidelines. SLUG managed the finances of the program and didn't interfere with program operations. In 1999, Lena secured funding through the Juvenile Probation Department. This was the program's first city contract and was a \$100,000 per year grant that provided the funding necessary to hire a full time Director and two case managers. Takai was hired as a case manager at GIRLS 2000 in early 1999 and was promoted to Director three months later.

The GIRLS 2000 program grew and thrived under Takai's leadership. Takai's vision was to transition the program from its infancy state into a fully developed girls leadership program. The first steps involved extensive outreach to more girls and families living in the "harbor road" public housing community where the program was located. As word of the program spread throughout the neighborhood, Takai focused her attention on creating a more inviting program space, providing more structured academic and enrichment programming and implementing a comprehensive gender-specific, youth development model specifically designed to meet the needs of African-American girls. At that time, there were very few girl-specific programs in general and not much information to draw on. However, Takai moved forward from a place of unconditional love and the belief that the most important element for success was to nurture and respond to the emerging needs of the girls. The enrollment swelled to almost 50 girls in a short period of time and the small one room program space became a bustling center for homework sessions, cooking classes, life-skills groups, dance classes, art classes and most importantly a safe place for girls in the community to come and receive care and support. Whatever needs the girls had, Takai set out to access the resources and provide them whatever they required. She developed a relationship with the UCSF on-site clinic to provide weekly specialized medical appointments for minor health care when she realized the girls had untreated issues that could develop into larger health problems if left unattended. Through a partnership with the San Francisco Food Bank, the program established a weekly free food pantry when the mothers of the girls kept coming to the program asking for help getting food to feed their families. The older girls attended filmmaking classes and made a movie about the impact of the ever increasing murders of their friends and brothers. The film won several awards and was shown at various film venues including the Sundance Film Festival. Art became a way for the girls to express some of the more painful areas of their lives and the program worked with Precita Eyes to create murals, did a self-portrait project based on female African warriors, the girls wrote stories about their lives that were bound into books and distributed. They participated in theater classes with Rhodessa Jones project, and Zaccho Dance company. Takai also focused the program on providing the girls with opportunities to expand their perspectives/experiences of the world beyond their neighborhood. Most of the girls had never been outside of Bayview Hunters Point except to ride a bus to school. Most of them had never been to the beach, seen a play or eaten in a restaurant. The program offered them experiences to strengthen their sense of self and imagine a world larger than just "harbor road". After a couple of years, the number of girls in the program was too large for the small room in the recreational center. Takai worked with the San Francisco Housing Authority to move the program across the street into an unused public housing three room unit. This expansion created greater flexibility in programming and allowed for more growth. The younger girls used the new location and the teen girls continued to receive services in the original space.

The relationship between GIRLS 2000 and SLUG provided a strong foundation for the beginning years of the agency and was instrumental in its expansion. In 2000, Muhammed became interested in running for the Board of Supervisors. As Lena was then working for Mayor Willie Brown, she arranged a meeting with him to see if he could get an endorsement from him. The Mayor's Office could not endorse Muhammed because he hadn't been a resident of the Bayview Hunters Point community for the appropriate period of time, but they offered him the position of Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works. During this time the City was trying to figure out what to do with the Bayview Safe Haven program.

Bayview Safe Haven- Bayview Safe Haven, like the other four Safe Haven's in San Francisco was a pilot program implemented by the Delancy Street Foundation for youth who were on probation. The original concept was that Delancy Street would launch the program and then it would be transitioned over to a non-profit that did youth development work in the respective communities of the program sites. The program budget was relatively small \$75000 and none of the non-profits had shown any interest in taking the program on. The City asked SLUG to act as the fiscal agent for the program, while the various services were divided up among various non-profits to perform services and activities for the program; however, there was no comprehensive plan for oversight or management of the project. Muhammed called Lena up one day and asked her to leave her job at the Mayor's Office and take on the directorship of the Bayview Safe Haven program. Muhammed said, "Lena, Lets trade places, you come to the community and I will go downtown." After much contemplation, Lena left the Mayor's Office and in July of 2000 came to be the Director of the Bayview Safe Haven program under the fiscal sponsorship of SLUG/GIRLS 2000.

The Bayview Safe Haven program was located in the Joseph Lee Recreational Facility "Joe Lee" on Mendell Street, at the intersection of Third Street and Oakdale, the heart of Bayview Hunters Point's "down-town" area. Every major bus passes through that intersection, it is the middle of Third Street, BVHP's main thoroughfare, and it is the headquarters for Bayview Hunters Point's underground economy. Unlike the rest of BVHP, where a person must have a "ghetto pass" to hustle, hustlers historically came from all over the community and outside of the community to hustle around the perimeter of the Joe Lee gym. The children who frequently came to Joe Lee were from all over Hunters Point, but primarily from the Kirkwood and Harbor Road public housing projects, the Shoreview subsidized housing developments, and the surrounding residential area on the flatlands of Hunters Point. Many of them were involved in the drug trade, had little parental support or supervision, were involved in the juvenile justice system, and were involved in turf issues of some kind. These were young people who did not display easy trust or respect for adults as many of them had been indoctrinated into the world of drugs, sex, and violence early into their childhood.

When Bayview Safe Haven first opened, the physical space of the program consisted of a few room dividers, an old desk and chair, and a telephone. For the first three months, Lena was the only staff person. Lena recruited youth who came to the gym and developed a program that consisted of cooking classes, field trips to free events and museums around the City, art projects, and lots of hanging around the gym talking and getting to know each other. The roster of the Bayview Safe Haven quickly grew as more youth heard about the field trips and smelled the food cooking or just stepped in to the lively conversations going on behind the room divider. Soon Lena purchased an old 8 passenger van and hired another part-time Case Manager and the programs' ranks swelled to 30

youth. Although it was dangerous and illegal, that van would be filled with over 15 youth, sitting on the floors and on each others laps. The young people yearned to get out of the community and take a break from the hustle and grind of their lives to take a moment out at the beach or go to the movies. As hard as many of these children were, they yearned for any piece of childhood peace they could capture. During the second year of the Bayview Safe Haven program, Lena convinced Muhammed to utilize his DPW workers to build a space for the Bayview Safe Haven within the Joe Lee gym that consisted of an office for staff and private meetings with youth, a living area, and a computer area. The program had 10 computers, sofas, and was decorated with beautiful pictures on the wall depicting images of strong and beautiful African American art and culture. She also secured two 15 passenger vans to transport the now 75 participants on the Bayview Safe Haven roster. Bayview Safe Haven had become the destination program for youth, ages 13-18, who congregated in that area. They loved the program because of the support and love they received on a daily basis, because it was a safe place, and because they got to participate in activities and outings that offered a respite from the oppressive negativity and violence that filled their daily lives.

Unfortunately, the violence followed many of these youth to the program. Young men from Sunnysdale and Oakdale (areas that were embroiled in conflict with Kirkwood, Harbor Road, and Shoreview) frequently came to the gym seeking the Bayview Safe Haven participants. Sometimes there were fights, sometimes there were shootouts both inside and outside of the gym. Despite the culture of love and family that was created among the Bayview Safe Haven participants, the program was plagued by an air of hyper vigilance and violence. Lena would often receive phone calls in the middle of the night from a youth calling to tell her that one of the participants had been shot. Unfortunately, some of those calls were a young person in shock, eerily calm announcing the murder of a beloved friend and participant in the program. Once the Bayview Safe Haven van was even shot up when a subcontractor who was transporting youth home after an agency Christmas party passed through a hostile territory and was barraged by gang of young people who sprayed the van full of bullet holes. One of the bullets penetrated the hood of the van and killed the engine, so the fan full of 9 participants and the driver had to escape out of the back window and flee on foot. Despite these horrifying incidents, there was a marked drop among participants in the areas of recidivism and truancy, and an increase in grades, reported connectedness to school, and sense of well-being. These findings were so significant that the Bayview Safe Haven was highlighted by the American Youth Policy Forum for Effective After-school programs and Lena Miller was asked to speak in front of congressional staffers and the United States Superintendent of Schools to talk about effective interventions for youth. In fact, Bayview Safe Haven was one of the only programs in the country that demonstrated outcomes for older youth in these areas.

While these experiences were scary and very painful, they prepared the agency for what would become its role as violence prevention and intervention experts in the Bayview Hunters Point community.

Peacekeepers: The Peacekeepers program was initiated by Mr. Terrell "Terry" Rogers and Mr. Demetrius "Sleeptight" Williams. Both men were community leaders who had been active "gang" leaders during the 80's crack wars. Both men had done time in prison but reformed themselves as a result of having children and witnessing the effect their actions had upon their community. During the mid 90's both men had advocated heavily to have the City open up jobs to young men, like them, in the community so that they could leave the drug game and support their families on legitimate

jobs. Their efforts were successful and as a result hundreds of residents from the public housing community received long-term, well-paying City jobs through the Housing Authority and the Department of Public Works. These efforts along with their ability to quell violence and mediate conflicts in the streets earned them the love and respect of almost every facet of the community. Their philosophy was that their generation had helped to destroy the community with drugs and violence, so that it was their responsibility to heal the community.

As a result of their success in mediating some of the most violent eruptions in the civil war that was going on in Bayview Hunters Point, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice ("MOCJ") asked them to establish a program to mitigate further conflicts as they emerged. One of the representatives in MOCJ informed Mr. Rogers and Mr. Williams to contact Lena Miller to help them establish a viable program in Bayview Hunters Point.

Ironically, Lena went to preschool with Demetrius and his mother was one of her teachers. Terray was close family friends with Lena's best friend so that it was an easy meeting from the beginning. Terray and Sleep expressed their desire to establish a program that would help restore the peace and stability to the neighborhood, particularly the Alice Griffith ("Double Rock") public housing developments where they had grown up. They were especially interested in this location because they felt that since Double Rock was located so far down Third Street, somewhat removed from the rest of Hunters Point, the community was isolated and often overlooked when it came to resources. Lena worked with Terray and Sleep to establish what would become the "Peacekeepers" in a unit within the Double Rock public housing community, on a tiny budget of \$60,000. A few months after the program opened, Sleptight enrolled in school to become a plumber and could not maintain a regular presence at the program. However, Terray used the funds to hire part-time Case Manager to be at the program everyday and implement programming. Terray had a full-time job as a Painter for Housing Authority, but he would come to the program after-work and spend time with the youth and the community at the new Peacekeepers program. Upon it opening, it seemed as if every young person living in Double Rock had joined the program. The little three bedroom unit was always overflowing with youth.

Terray was the Program Director of the Peacekeepers, but he also played a vital role within the Hunters Point Family agency. Whenever youth in any of the programs became engaged in conflict, staff would call Terray to get to the bottom of the issue. Often within a few phone calls and a few hours, the issue would be resolved. Terray had the rare gift of being able to quickly understand the subtle nuances of even the most complex conflicts and using common sense to bring almost any issue to an amicable solution. That gift coupled with the extraordinary level of respect he had on the streets gave him the power to literally be the Peacekeeper in Bayview Hunters Point. He did this work without attention or fanfare, which is really the only effective way it can be done. While other so called violence prevention programs would attempt to arrange massive sit downs to arrange a peace treaty, and call the politicians and impress to make them aware of their efforts, Terray would make a phone call and the issue would go away as if it had never even emerged in the first place. Terray's influence on the streets allowed the Hunters Point Family to be even more effective with our children because now, instead of supporting them through a particularly dangerous situation, we could actually actively help them resolve it by directly engaging the other party. Terray soon became the defacto "father" of the Hunters Point Family, an organization that had been completely managed

and operated by women. Terray, being a strong and confident man was not intimidated by this, but was honored to step into this role and help lead the Hunters Point Family into a better future.

Gilman Rec-Connect: In early 2005 the Department of Children, Youth and their Families and the Department of Recreation and Parks began steps to create a public/private partnership of quality youth development recreation programs. Takai was approached to sit on the initial community assessment committee to discuss the viability of such a collaboration. By this time, HPF had established a solid reputation of having productive, informal partnerships with RPD since the original GIRLS 2000 site was located within the Milton Myers Recreation center and the Bayview Safe Haven was still operating within the Joseph Lee Recreation center. As the initiative moved forward, Takai was selected to be a member of the Initiative Steering committee. The Initiative was formalized as Rec Connect and involved the co-leading of recreation clubhouses in five neighborhoods with the highest concentration of children in need of quality after-school recreation programs. As the process unfolded, and it became clear that Bayview Hunters Point would likely be chosen as one of the pilot areas for a Rec Connect site; Takai stepped down from the committee so there would be no conflict of interest should HPF want to apply. In 2006, HPF applied for and was awarded a DCYF grant to co-lead the Gilman Rec-Connect program. The agency was excited about this new program because it is situated right outside the Alice Griffith public housing community where the Peacekeepers program is located and has a history of being a meeting place for families in the Double Rock community. The focus of the Rec-Connect Initiative was to create a “community hub” with multi-generational program and community events. By this time, HPF had fully articulated and implemented its “extended family” model of service delivery and thus was able to seamlessly fold this new program into the agency. The under-used Gilman club house quickly became a bustling community program with toddler programs in the mornings, after-school activities for children, workshops and enrichment classes for teens in the evenings, trainings for community organizations and family events on the weekends.

[Ayoka: This section rocks! It's the core and it is beautiful. Simply stated, well written and totally on point...]

The Root of HPF Programs

“Humanity is in 2010. This is significant. We are in a new millennium and there are some new things going on that have never happened before. The question is how do human being raise our young? How are we shaping and informing ourselves and who we become over time. Our children are watching and waiting to see. Things are crazy. The whole world has changed. So we (“HPF”) go back to the basics- People who have love enough for everybody. You can see this and measure it. That is what can be replicated. We are confirming for people that despite the madness and the generations that have been destroyed by bad food, failing mental health, semi-automatic weapons, irresponsible media, chemicals, and an overall feeling of hopelessness, it is love that will save us. It always has been. Our (“HPF” love is so big. We believe that we can heal our children and help them grow though that big big love and we aren’t afraid to share it with them. We can give it freely.”

The roots of the Hunters Point Family are firmly established in Love. Love in friends and neighbors households is what saved founder, Lena Miller’s life. Love for the community that nurtured her is what let her to start the program. Love for her children and desire for a better world in which to raise them is what gave her strength to maintain the programs through the most trying struggles. Love for children and Black people is what brought Takai to the GIRLS 2000 program. Love for the little girls in the program and a commitment to creating a better future for them was her motivation to build the program. Love from her community is what inspires Takai to continue to build a legacy for our children where they grow strong and powerful and create a better world for generations to come.

Love is not a concept that is often talked about as a fundamental element in youth development programs. Love has been removed from the language of education, after-school programs, youth development, and community development. Love is subjective. When boundaries are not appropriate, it can be destructive. Love is not readily measurable. It can not be taught in a classroom. It cannot legally be required as part of a job description or job requirements. Despite the ethereal nature of love, it is the most powerful healing element known to mankind. Countless laboratory studies have demonstrated this fact over and over again: without love, living things wither and die. The Hunters Point Family embraces love because it is the only thing that will save us from withering and dying. The community has absorbed the toxic pollutants from the Superfund and 325 other toxic sites at the Shipyards, the noxious fumes from the City’s sewer, the PG&E power plant, and the dump. The community has suffered through joblessness, incarceration of half of its male population, the plagues of crack and violence, only to slip into the last phases of destruction and removal through gentrification. The children have lost hope for themselves and the community has lost hope for its children. The Hunters Point Family understands that we do not have the luxury of clinging to the sterile concepts of youth development that are used in the after-school programs and community centers of the suburbs. We have to go straight to the source and make use of the super power. Best practices are secondary and the tools of the primary practice-Love.

For years, the Hunters Point Family was not transparent about this practice to outsiders. In the atmosphere of poverty pimps, con artists, and predators, it sounded so contrived. In a time when funders were looking for programs that have capacity, utilized best practices, and evaluation to develop their programming, love sounded like a cop out. The Hunters Point Family learned the language of youth development. We researched and implemented best practices, we evaluated our programs, we measured and quantified our services. Now that the agency has achieved outcomes that have been adopted as nationwide standards, and developed capacity, and has been accepted as a model for best practices for other youth development programs, we can come out of the closet and share our true secret of our success: We love our children!

The Hunters Point Family attracts people to work for the agency who share this deep passion and commitment to healing and restoring their community. People who come because they need a job and like working with kids, soon leave. They are overwhelmed with the needs and the issues of the young people. They are unable to balance the demands placed on their psyche with the other job requirements such as creating structure, facilitating activities and programming for the youth. Those who are driven by a deep love for their community are energized by these demands, because they know that here is where the real work is happening. Here is where they can make a difference. They are called to the Hunters Point Family because it is consistent with their own life calling. The Hunters Point Family's power grows exponentially as the force of these people align. The power of the proverbial mustard seed of love, has grown into a mighty tree, with strong roots, a powerful trunk, branches throughout the community, and abundant with fruit-The Hunters Point Family.

Spirituality- Spirituality is another one of taboo subject when it comes to working with children. Because there has been so much corruption with religion, people tend to be suspicious of any type of reference to a higher power, particularly when dealing with youth. Unfortunately, people and organizations have used this powerful force to feed their greed, ego, and lust for power, primarily because it is one of the most powerful ways to harness people's energy. For when you illuminate people's connection to "the Source," their personal power grows exponentially. When this power is focused, it can move mountains.

Because spirituality is such a controversial issue, the deep spirituality that drives the Hunters Point Family was also kept 'in the closet' for years. During holiday meals, an elder was asked to bless the food, but that was the extent of any shared or acknowledged spirituality within the agency. But while, no mention was made of a higher power between or among staff and youth, it was like our breath. Whether you use transcendental yoga techniques to breath, or never think about your breath, it's still there working every second. Our awareness or lack of it does not prevent the breath; although, conscious breathing can work miracles within the body, making one stronger, facilitating the healing process, and bringing calm in the state of pain, confusion, or imbalance.

Lena Miller was clear about the power of spirituality from the time she started the agency. In fact, her founding and maintenance of the Hunters Point Family was an act of spirituality, a calling to bring healing and balance to the world. Every strategic move, every time of growth was preceded with an act of prayer, a calling to the spirit to request guidance and protection, to order her footsteps on the path that would manifest the healing and balance to her people. These methods never failed. Despite overwhelming challenges, both personal and professional, she would emerge victorious. The

first time these methods were shared openly with the youth, the agency was facing a \$280,000 deficit. After weeks of being in a state of panic and exasperation, Lena called every single participant in the Bayview Safe Haven program, where she was then Director. She told each participant what the situation was and asked them to pray that night for a resolution. They did and within three months, through a variety of circumstances, the deficit disappeared. When participants were shot and struggling to hold on to life or their ability to walk, she told the victim or his friends to focus a bright light on the injury, in their minds eye, and breath in the healing of the area. It was effective every single time. So spirituality would only be openly discussed in times of extreme crisis or life and death situations and even though several people had witnessed the miracles, it was never discussed afterward. The next day came and life moved on. It wasn't that anyone was trying to avoid the subject, its just that most people had become so out of practice of acknowledging or discussing spirituality that it never surfaced much as a subject. In fact, most of the youth in the programs had expressed their doubts that a higher power existed. While there were varying reasons among them, most felt forsaken. "If there was a God, why would I have been allowed to suffer as I did" seemed to be a common sentiment. Many of the young people had been immersed in a world that was so degrading, abusive, and violent, that any concept of God or a higher power seemed like a Disney story, a concept they had long outgrown, along with their innocence. The vast majority of churches in Bayview have separated themselves from the struggles of the youth in Bayview, except to host funerals. Even during funerals, the preacher would denounce the young people for wearing sagging jeans and gold teeth. Because God was mainly associated with church, many of these young people felt victimized and judged again, so they rejected the church and God, as it offered no love, power, or strength to them.

Around 2006, Lena and Takai began discussing their spiritual beliefs and experiences with each other. Although they had both come from very different religious backgrounds, their belief systems had converged to a similar point. Both women shared a metaphysical view of spirituality that views the Universe as a living and complex system of interconnectedness. Every living being has a direct connection to this source, and the power of that connection is based upon the consciousness of the being. Again, like breath, to some it is an automatic unconscious process that merely keeps them alive, to others it is the ultimate source of infinite power within their mind and body.

These random, esoteric conversations between Lena and Takai, behind closed doors, could have gone on indefinitely. But just as one suddenly becomes aware of the power of their breath, when for some reason their air has been restricted, tragedy revealed the necessity of bringing spirituality into the consciousness of the Hunters Point Family.

On January 12, 2009, Terrell Rogers, the founder of the Peacekeepers program, and the father of the Hunters Point Family was murdered outside of his daughter's high school basketball game. Terray's murder came on the heels of the murder of 4 other Hunters Point Family participants in 2008. News of his death stopped everyone in the agency in their tracks. Everything appeared to be hopeless. If the Peacekeepers were being murdered, how could any of us stop the children from murdering or being murdered. If Terray could be murdered, what would stop any of us from being murdered. The issues were too deep, the problems too complex. No one could see through it. What we, the adults or staff, were feeling, is what our youth had felt most or all of their lives. The pain was too thick. There was no light at the end of the tunnel, only more tragedy, more pain, more loss, more disappointment. There was no tunnel, only a long, lonely, dark pit.

Terray was murdered on a Saturday night. Monday the staff and other community members gathered at the Hunters Point Family headquarters to discuss what needed to be done, to grieve, and process their emotions. During that meeting, a drug addict walked in to the garage, while everyone was upstairs and stole the new Mac computers that had been donated to the program for the youth to begin a new technology project. When the police arrived, Lena went downstairs to give a report, in the middle of the report, her 11 year old son called her frantic. He was on his way to his after-school program and a young man followed him off of the bus and robbed him at gun point to steal his phone. This was the type of situation that she, as a single mother, would call Terray for support and assistance. No tunnel, only a long, lonely dark pit.

Within a few weeks, Lena had reached her breaking point. The Board of Directors voted to give her a three month sabbatical to get some respite. During that time she looked for another job, where she could have a cubical and non-life threatening worries. However, this would not be her destiny.

During her time off, Lena found the light. The Hunters Point Family could not and would not survive doing business as usual. Convincing people that children in Hunters Point were worth saving and helping them with their homework and after school activities would never fundamentally change the destructive climate in the community. The cancer had spread and become too malignant. Our efforts were too little, too late. To defeat the cancer we had to become stronger. We had to connect with the source. This is the moment when we came out of the closet.

We asked the staff to connect with their higher power, without giving guidance or suggestions to what that should be or look like. We made it clear, that we would never try to push a belief system on anyone. We weren't trying to sell anything, coerce, or manipulate, but that we had to conjure up our power or lose it. Lena brought in Audiobooks to staff meeting, Deepak Chopra, Napoleon Hill's 'Think and Grow Rich', 'The Law of Attraction', and Zig Ziglar's 'How to Get What You Want'. The point was that all of these mainstream, pop-culture books were all saying the same thing. In order to become the subject in your life story, not an object, one must connect to the source and focus the mind, then the actions become ordered. While these are not major revelatory concepts, in our context they were. People had become so conditioned to reacting to the external stimuli, that they lost their power. We were trying to teach them to control their inner world as a means to manifesting their reality. First we had to wake up the staff and teach them to use these concepts and recognize the changes in their lives, so they would understand the process. Once they learned the truth and consistency of this process, they could teach the youth. When the youth reconnect with their power, the tipping point will be reached so that they can see the light. When we collectively embrace the light, balance and harmony is restored to the community. We are victorious.

Economic Self-Sufficiency:

"Our thing is about being positive. Where do you want to put your attention? We want to put our attention on life and growth and things that are affirming and things that feed you holistically and bring health. It doesn't mean that we don't know that there is pollution and oppression, and all of those things. But if you move towards positivity then you aren't having the energy to focus on the negative. We want to

get our kids to focus their attention on the right things. We want them to understand their power and be able to use it to move themselves forward.”

Most poor people have a very dysfunctional relationship with money. There are an infinite number of reasons why some people end up in poverty and other do not. Some of the richest people in the history of the world grew up in poverty. Some people started off in very wealthy families or possessed wealth early on, but a series of poor choices caused them to lose their wealth and join the ranks of the poor. While a lack of resources and opportunity are very real issues, they alone do not determine one's long-term financial status. Almost every book written on the art of accumulating wealth states that it is one's relationship with money that ultimately determines their financial status.

While some people find the pursuit of financial prosperity to be vulgar and emphasize other aspects of life such as family, health, love, spirituality, community, etc. to be much more important and valuable than money, these concepts are not necessarily at odds with one another. Money in and of itself has no real value, it is a representation of energy. A person's lack of money is often the material manifestation of a mentality of scarcity; whereas, wealth often indicates a mentality of abundance. This is not a political statement, an indictment of the poor, or a justification for the injustice that has been wrought by many of the wealthy people in this country to accumulate their riches. Indeed there are exceptions; however, it is a prominent pattern that we must pay attention to if we seek to change our circumstances. The Hunters Point Family views financial prosperity as a metaphor for abundance, the antidote to a mentality of scarcity. The Hunters Point Family is working to bring the realization to our children that there is enough food, clothes, housing, education, love, family, and beauty for all of us to live our best lives. This statement may not be true under our current circumstances, where we are in a state of dependence on the government and corporate charity to have our best interests at heart; however, it is a universal truth. If we expect to change our circumstances and our quality of life, we must first change our thinking and then our actions. We will not survive in this state of dependence, because these entities do not have our best interest at heart, they have their own best interest at heart, which are directly in conflict with ours.

The youth that the Hunters Point Family serve are some of the poorest in the country. Although San Francisco has been deemed one of the most expensive places in the world to live, over 90% of the families residing in San Francisco's public housing projects, live below the federal poverty line. Although this poverty becomes more pronounced in a City that has one of the highest incomes per capita in the country and caters to the well-heeled, the living conditions of these families can appear to overflowing wealth and abundance compared to those living in abject poverty in the slums of Mexico, India, and Africa. Wealth and poverty are always relative, so that both are almost a mindset. The truth is that in America, there are some very real obstacles to achieving financial prosperity if one is born into poverty, particularly for African Americans, but it is not impossible. The Hunters Point Family can not afford to adopt the viewpoint that the system is set up and rigged against us so that we are destined to toil away in poverty for generations. We are aware of the obstacles. We are aware of the injustice throughout the history of this country toward African Americans and other racial minorities. We are aware of the prejudices of employers, educators, and the justice system. However, we cannot accept that we are beat. If Oprah made it out of poverty to become one of the richest people on the planet, if 50 Cent made it out of the ghetto to become a mogul, and millions of people in between who came from similar circumstances, then that is an indication of possibility. We

must seek out that possibility, research it, and pursue it or we are surely destined to succumb to the destruction and dissolution that has spread through out community like a malignant cancer. According to the majority of experts on wealth creation, this is the first step: Belief that you can achieve wealth. Most of the youth and families don't believe that they can achieve wealth. They have become so conditioned to poverty, obstacles, injustice, and misfortune, that they have difficulty believing that another reality is possible. The reality that they are exposed to and seem within their grasp is the popularity and notoriety that comes from the gangster lifestyles, prison, and the underground economy. The Hunters Point Family is working to challenge these belief systems by demonstrating that another reality is possible. By connecting our youth to that reality, putting their hands in it, immersing them in it, and reassuring them that it is theirs. They may not choose to embrace it, but it will be their choice. Those who do choose to embrace a reality where abundance and prosperity exist, will have the opportunity to thrive.

Over time, and deep examination of the cycles of abundance and poverty in our community, the Hunters Point Family has come to the conclusion that in order to transform our quality of life, we must reclaim control of our lives and destinies. We must come to terms with the fact that no one is coming to save us. No one is looking out for our best interests and no one really cares about what happens to our children or our community. We must care. We must save ourselves. We must create our own financial opportunities and build our own economic infrastructure. The task may be overwhelming and difficult, but it has been done before, and we can do it again.

The impetus for launching the Hunters Point Family's newest division, Ujaama Employment & Entrepreneurship came after a long period of hopelessness and mourning over the murder of 10 of our participants, over a three year period, followed by the murder of one of the agency's Program Directors, Mr. Terrell Rogers. we realized that if we want different results, we must dramatically change the way we do business. After we hit rock bottom, we knew something had to change. The staff and the youth of the Hunters Point Family didn't want to be victims or remain in a victim mentality. We realized that we must be the architects of our own destiny. In order to be in control of our own financial health, we have to create our own economic base.

The Hunters Point Family has been very successful in decreasing truancy, recidivism, violent acts, and drop out rates, while increasing grade point average, self-esteem, and employment; however, it is not enough. Although we are able increase the outcomes and "success" of some youth, we will never reach the "tipping point" and change the culture of violence, poverty, and hopelessness that is pervasive among young people, unless we fundamentally change the social and economic infrastructure of the community.

Through the Ujaama Program, the Hunters Point Family implemented a job training and placement program that offers a full spectrum of job training and placement services to youth and young adults.

Youth Ages 10-16: Youth are placed in one of HPF's 3 certified, urban organic farms, where they learn: the benefits of organic gardening over conventional methods; composting techniques; recycling processes; the positive effect of trees on the atmosphere; promotion of healthy eating in the community; community stewardship through educating and feeding the community with living, organic produce; and connectedness with the earth, the rhythms of the seasons, and growth cycles of plants. Because many of these youth are too young to receive work permits, they receive weekly

stipends for their work. Over 50% of all HPF participants work or have worked in one of HPF gardens at some point.

Youth Ages 16-18: HPF offers the Summer Youth Employment Program that provides minimum wage employment for over 75 youth and the Bridges program that provides summer employment for an additional 60 youth each summer. These programs are designed to work with “high-risk” youth with multiple barriers to securing employment to teach them soft skills and hard skills in the area of the green economy, technology, and social services. Youth are placed in jobs and internships that will provide them with exposure and training for career options. Youth also participate in weekly workshops that explore various career options, appropriate dress and behavior in the workplace, interview skills, resume workshops, conflict resolution, and professional communication.

Young Adults Ages 18-30: HPF offers three programs to assist young adults identify and secure training and/or job opportunities that are consistent with their career goals.

- 1) WIA Job Placement-Participants work with a Career Coach to develop a resume, perform a job search, learn and practice interview skills, and appropriate workplace etiquette. Once participants have mastered these basics, the Career Coach works in partnership with participants to identify and secure a non-subsidized job and provides ongoing support services so that they maintain the job.
- 2) Job Readiness Initiative-Career Coaches work with participants to identify and remove barriers to employment, including lack of transportation, lack of drivers license, union dues, school fees, access to childcare, mental health issues, substance abuse issues, high school diploma or GED, and housing issues. HPF has a Barrier Mitigation Funds to assist participants with purchasing uniforms, pay school tuition, DMV fees, union dues, etc. The Coach also refers participants to partnering programs to address issues related to child-care, education, housing, mental and substance abuse issues. Coaches work with participants to ensure they meet the requirements for various education and training programs, including the City’s Sector Academies, City College, San Francisco State University, and the various labor unions.
- 3) High Risk Population-HPF works with young adults who are on probation or parole to prepare them for employment or post-secondary education and training opportunities through workshops, one-on-one coaching, barrier removal, and subsidized employment placements within the HPF agency and other businesses throughout San Francisco.

The overall goal of the Ujaama program is to prepare youth and young adults for a career that is consistent with their skills and interest. Early on in the development of Ujaama, the HPF staff was clear that creating another job training and placement program that simply prepared young people for entry level jobs was unacceptable. In order to break the cycles of poverty, low educational attainment, and hopelessness that is pervasive within the Bayview Hunters Point community, we must raise our expectations for our youth, while providing a clear pathway and support toward a future of prosperity and fulfillment. Thus, HPF focuses on the outcomes that will prepare young people to achieve this goal. The following are the 5 most critical variables HPF tracks:

- 1) **Educational Attainment**-HPF assesses all Ujaama participants’ literacy and numeracy skills utilizing the CASAS placement test. Participants take the CASAS test upon enrollment into the Ujaama program and every six months thereafter to determine if there have been any significant improvements to their skill levels. HPF also tracks participants’ educational attainment, including last

grade level completed, if they need a diploma or a GED, and their educational goals. Ujaama's Career Coaches document participants' progress toward completing their GED, diploma, or entering into post secondary educational institutions and/or training programs.

2) Barriers to Education/Employment-During their enrollment into the Ujaama program, Career Coaches assess participants to determine if they have any barriers to employment and education and assist them to remove these barriers through referrals to appropriate agencies or HPF's Barrier Removal Fund. The referral and subsequent services are captured and recorded.

3) Career & Personal Goals-During the assessment phase in the Ujaama program, all participants complete an Individual Service Strategy ("ISS"), with their Career Coach. The ISS includes a worksheet where participants are asked to record their skills, interests, short-term, and long term goals. The goal worksheet is used to inform the individualized services participants receive. The ISS is updated every three months to document participants progress in achieving their goals or to update their service plan as their goals evolve.

4) Job Readiness Skills-Career Coaches contact each participant, at least once a week, to provide support and ensure they are making consistent progress toward achieving their educational and career goals. During these meetings and observation of participants in life-skills workshops, Coaches are able to observe participants ability to communicate, show up on time, follow-through on assignments and responsibilities, integrate new concepts and experiences for growth, etc. Career Coaches maintain case notes that document clients growth and overall job readiness skills in participant files.

5) Employment/Training Programs-Career Coaches document participants participation in trainings programs and attainment of employment in their case notes and upload these activities into the Workforce Central system.

Ujaama's entrepreneurship program is in the process of launching two social enterprises. While the Hunters Point Family is hopeful that our social enterprise will grow to support our agency's programming, this goal is only a benchmark of our success. Our vision is that the social enterprise will create an economic infrastructure for our youth and their families. The social enterprise will not only provide job training and employment, but teach hundreds of our youth how to develop, manage, and maintain a business. Some of these youth will then manage and grow the company and many more will gain the confidence, skill, and experience needed to start their own businesses. The Hunters Point Family will use our social enterprise to create a paradigm shift in the mentality of our young people. By experiencing and participating in the start-up and implementation of the social enterprise, they will experience what so many other young people take for granted: The possibility of realizing their dreams.

The Facts: How We Know HPF's Approach Works!

The Hunters Point participates in several rigorous evaluations over the course of a year. Because the agency has several contracts with City government to provide services, from youth development to employment, the agency necessarily tracks outcomes and records service units for every participant. Most importantly, HPF administration and staff can review the data, at-will, to monitor our performance and ensure that we are meeting our goals and outcomes. In addition to ongoing evaluations conducted by contracting agencies, HPF also conducts internal evaluations to determine if we are meeting our own qualitative goals and outcomes to ensure the agency's programs and services are consistent with our mission, vision, and values.

The results of HPF's latest evaluation, youth, demonstrate the effectiveness of our approach: 96% agreed that The staff here challenges me to do my best; 94% agreed that they could go to staff if I need advice about personal problems; 73% agreed that they felt safer at their program than other places in the community; 96% stated they feel respected by other kids in the program; 95% stated I get to go places that I don't usually go; 96% agreed that I get to learn things here that I don't get to learn anywhere else; and 72% agreed that I've had a chance to do things to help people in my community; and 85% agreed that during the school year, I have enough interesting things to do after school. In open ended questions that asked participants what they liked most about their programs, almost 90% of respondents said that they feel like it is a family or a second home.

Program Directors also collected data for quantitative outcomes such as recidivism, grades, and employment. The following is the cumulative results of participant outcomes:

- Recidivism was reduced by 93% among female participants and 64% among male participants.
- Overall grade point average increased by .85 for female participants and .32 for male participants.
- Truancy decreased by 76% for female participants and 50% for male participants.
- 98% of female participants who expressed interest in working secured employment either through one of HPF's employment programs or outside employers; 68% of male participants who expressed interest in working secured employment either through one of HPF's employment programs or outside employers

HPF's basic philosophy and service delivery format utilize an extended family approach to deliver a holistic continuum of services in the areas of social support, health relationships with peers and adults, education, leadership, community service and accountability, and exposure to new experiences. This model shares the nationally recognized juvenile and violence prevention philosophy and strategies shared by all HPF programs. According to **a report from Law Enforcement, entitled, "Prime Time for Juvenile Crime Or Youth Enrichment and Achievement."** A Research Brief by FIGHTCRIME: INVEST IN KIDS:

"The Bayview Safe Haven after-school program in San Francisco matched participants with similar non-participants. For the youths with prior histories

of arrest, participants were half as likely as non- participants to be rearrested within six months after joining the program. Not all after-school programs will produce these results. Quality matters. Turning children away from involvement in crime will take programs with quality designs and adequate numbers of caring, well-trained staff.”

Thus, the Hunters Point Family ***utilizes programmatic strategies that have not only been proven to work, they set the standard for youth development and juvenile delinquency programming for the nation.***⁵ The United States Senate, Assembly, and Congress have also recognized HPF’s work in violence prevention and mental health with “high-risk” youth. HPF received the following awards and recognition between 2007-2009: Certificate of Recognition for work in Violence Prevention from Senator Leland Yee; Certificate of Appreciation for work in Violence Prevention from Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, Majority Whip; Certificate of Recognition for efforts to address mental health from Senator Carol Migden; and Exceptional Programs and People Award for Promoting Mental Health for Youth, from the SF Dept. of Public Health.

⁵ Harvard Family Research Project: **Review of Out-of-School Time Program Quasi-Experimental and Experimental Evaluation Results** www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/afterschool/resources/snapshot1.html - 73k
 American Youth Policy Forum. **The Impact of Afterschool Programs on Personal and Social Skill: Recent Findings from a Scientific Review** www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/fb110906.htm - 14k - [Cached](#)
 National Dropout Prevention Center Network: **Essential Elements of Quality After-school Programs.** www.cisnet.org/library/download.asp?file=CIS-NDPC_2006_01-30.pdf -
 The Eisenhower Foundation. **Positive Youth Development: A Review of the Research** www.eisenhowerfoundation.org/pdfs/pydfinal.pdf
 Blank, Susan. **Hours that Count: Using After-school Programs to Help Prevent Risky Behaviors and Keep Kids Safe** www.tascorp.org/publications/catalog/HoursthatCount/Hours_That_Count.pdf

Stories of SuccessG2K

Meg-Anne

Candice

LaDiamond

BVSH

Tiffany

Ashley

Nicole

Jermaine

PK

Jasmine

Gilman

Joe Kelly

What Do Staff Need to Know and Do

"I evaluated the staff at Girls 2000 on their ability to attach to the girls. If you aren't available to them it isn't the right fit. Like if a staff called and told me how one of the girls just got shot, I'm gonna ask them 'what are you doing on the phone with me and not in the emergency room with them right now because I'm on my way there! I don't care if it's 1 a.m. in the morning.' Then that girl might not be able to attach to you because you weren't there for them in a crisis. This might not be the job for you. If you feel like you work from 9-5 this isn't the job for you. We always told the staff when 3 o'clock rolls around that there is no more paperwork and no more phone calls. When that first girl hits the door I want everyone here to say how you doing? How was your day? And give her your undivided attention before you start programming. If there was a staff person who was trying to be on the computer or wasn't interacting with the girls than we had to talk to them to see if they were a right fit."

One of the primary factors in the Hunters Point Family's strength and success today lies in its staff. HPF staff are by definition powerful, intelligent, compassionate, and dedicated to their community. The staff are the backbone of the Hunters Point Family and our collective success or failure rests squarely on their shoulders. However, it took years of cultivation and discernment to get to this point.

People are attracted to working with youth for many different reasons. Some genuinely like working with young people, some are unconsciously working out their own issues from childhood, some think it's a pretty easy gig where they can pick up some cash. At the Hunters Point Family, we have had experience with all kinds. All inevitably interview with a very convincing story about why they have dedicated their lives to children and the community; however, many are called, few are chosen. While the Hunters Point Family definitely offers an opportunity to work with youth, our target population represents the extreme end of the bell curve. Many have been abused by the most trusted adults in their lives and, almost all have been traumatized by community violence. These are the quintessential example of youth who make one earn their respect. They can smell fear, weakness, or disingenuousness from a mile a way and most are all too eager to exploit and expose these qualities in those who are eager to try their fate at working with the Hunters Point Family. New staff are tested on almost every level, and every time they fail one of these tests, the young people are sure to report their misstep to their superiors. While this system may appear to be harsh, it is the natural process for ensuring that the best quality people are responsible for children who really need it.

In addition to having a developed sense of self and exceptional people skills, Hunters Point Family staff must also have a strong skill set around program planning and implementation. Everyday, there are structured activities at each HPF program site. Staff must be able to research educational and enrichment activities, schedule them, organize, and implement the activities. They must also be able

to capture them in writing and complete detailed reports on the activities and other case management activities.

Finally, all HPF staff must learn how to remain cool under pressure, particularly in cases of emergency. Because HPF targets the most high risk youth in Bayview Hunters Point, many of them tend to be in or around violent activities. Even when the youth are not directly involved, often times the violence can come to our front door. This year (2010) a young man was murdered in front of the GIRLS 2000 program. Last year, (2009) a shootout ensued in the gateway of the headquarters of the Hunters Point Family as a group of young men were coming for a job-training workshop. In 2006, a group of young men sprayed one of the program vans with AK's and other semi-automatic weapons because they thought one of their enemies was in the van. While these events may seem extremely dangerous and frightening, unfortunately, they are all too common in the lives of many of our youth. It is not that the Hunters Point Family is attracting these violent incidents, but that we serve the youth where this type of violence is pervasive in their lives. Although these incidents are dangerous and very frightening, they provide staff with an opportunity to intervene and de-escalate a situation, before it results in greater loss of life. Therefore, staff have to be unafraid and willing to take on this responsibility.

This set of skills is definitely a tall order for the average person; however, the people who are attracted to the Hunters Point Family are usually driven by one common factor: a deep love and commitment to their community. The staff who are most successful at the Hunters Point Family and rise up through the ranks and/or enjoy longevity are those who are excited by these challenges because they know that the real work is being done here. They know there is violence in the community and are grateful to come to a place that deals with it, not that shuts its doors and windows waiting for it to pass. They know that the children in the community have been exploited for years by people who felt they could make an easy paycheck by working with children no one really cared about or would ever check up on. They embrace being held to a high standard for their quality of work because that reflects a genuine care for the children we serve. They know that the young people are looking for any hole to exploit in their personalities and they welcome it, knowing that it provides an opportunity for the young people to bond with a person who is genuinely strong and compassionate so that they may have an example to emulate in their own lives.

Hunters Point Family staff seem to be born and not made. Those who can not handle the pressure usually have short history of complaining about the youth to their supervisor, demonstrating how situations aren't fair, demanding a youth be kicked out of the program for some slight made to them etc. These are the staff that do not make it long. Those people who take to the environment like a fish to water are usually promoted and encourage to develop their own programming or programs that reflect their own ideas of community development. HPF encourages independent thinking and creativity; for, we know our strength and longevity lies within our people.

Supporting Youth and Their Families

While the Hunters Point Family focuses on youth development, our ultimate goal is to strengthen the African American community within Bayview Hunters Point, we just choose to target our efforts on the children as change agents for the family and ultimately for the community. This is a very different focus than traditional youth development programs that assumes youth are coming from relatively stable contexts. Because the Hunters Point Family targets high-risk youth, the majority of the youth we serve come from families that are in crisis. Over 95% come from single parent households; 100% live in poverty; 43% have an immediate family member who is involved with the criminal justice system; 70% are living with a family member with substance abuse issues; 35% a history of involvement with the Dept. of Human Services; and 100% have a close friend or family member who has been murdered within the last 2 years. Thus, the majority of youth are coping with multiple stressors in addition to the traditional ones associated with adolescence and young adulthood.

For many of the HPF participants, the programs are a retreat from their often chaotic home lives, a home away from home. The majority of HPF participants come to their program after school and stay until it is time to go to bed. HPF staff ensure they receive help with their homework and complete their assignments, provide quality enrichment and educational activities, provide a listening ear and a comforting shoulder, and facilitate fun activities on Friday nights. More importantly, youth find community at the programs. Other youth from their neighborhood are there and there is a shared culture of love, respect, and learning. HPF Case Managers are there to support every aspect of participants' needs and development. They transport and accompany youth to doctors appointments, court visits, parent-teacher conferences, and other appointments as necessary. HPF Case Managers develop an understanding with all participants that we are committed partners in their development. Most importantly we develop an understanding with participants parents and caregivers that we are in partnership with them, not in competition, instead of, and not in judgment.

Because over 96% of HPF staff are residents of the Bayview Hunters Point community, many know most of the parents or are able to form an easy bond as they share an understanding of the context of the families. HPF staff make a point to familiarize themselves with their participants family and establish their roles and responsibilities to the participant and the family, upon the time of enrolment. Case Managers speak with a representative of the family on a weekly, sometimes daily basis, to check in, and strategize about participants. By establishing consistent communication and standards between participants home life and the programs, a more stable environment is created because youth know they are being paid attention to and cared for within a larger network. The positive working relationship between the staff and the families allow the staff to have a greater impact on participants because when they know you have the trust and respect of their families, they are able to trust and respect the staff.

Overtime, families have come to view the Hunters Point Family as resource and a helping agent for the community. In addition to services for youth, HPF staff also support parents with advocacy

within the Social Service system, accessing resources such as food and housing, mental health services, or basic advice for some of the issues they are struggling with. We understand that the overall stability of the family has a major impact on the young person, so we make every effort to improve the quality of life for the entire family when it is in our capacity. The difference between HPF programs and the typical youth development program, is that we do not see ourselves as outside of the families and the community, we are the community. Our families and our lives are interconnected. Families don't feel judged or misunderstood, they come to see us as part of their extended family. This "buy-in" by the participants, their families, and the community is what has contributed to the Hunters Point Family's success. The community trusts our staff, they trust our programs, and they trust our 'brand.'

Building the Next Generation of Organizational & Community Leadership – Our Strategies

The Hunters Point Family's vision is: *"To strengthen and empower our youth so that they may become wise, compassionate, and powerful leaders who will help transform Bayview Hunters Point into a thriving and healthy community."* Thus, strengthening and enhancing leadership capacity within our youth is a core goal in all Hunters Point Family programs and services. Because the social and economic fabric of the Bayview Hunters Point community has been devastated over the last 30 years, it is detrimental that strong leaders emerge who can restore the integrity and vitality into the community. If not, the Bayview Hunters Point community will simply cease to exist within the next decade.

The Hunters Point Family has dedicated a lot of thought and effort into cultivating our next generation of leadership. Our first wholly articulated and documented efforts began during the height of the violent warfare in the community. Because of our success in working with "gang-involved" youth, the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice and the Juvenile Probation Department began awarding the Hunters Point Family increasing violence prevention and intervention contracts. In the beginning, most of these contracts were designed to target the neighborhood leaders or "shot-callers" to involve them in intensive case management, employment, education, and enrichment activities in an effort to develop a relationship with them and keep them engaged in positive activities. Many of the activities involved exploring personal issues around violence, grief, anger management, communication skills, and other aspects that contributed to or reduced their involvement in violent activities. While many aspects of these programs were successful, we were not satisfied with their overall outcomes. We were able to have a significant impact on reducing their level of violent activities. Staff had a greater ability to intervene and prevent several homicides because they had deep relationships with the young people involved and we were able to reduce the recidivism among the youth in our programs. However, these youth were still immersed in the politics of their violent and destructive worlds. Over time, we realized that we were not able to have a significant impact on the life outcomes of our youth because our focus remained fixed on violence. Although, we were successful at demonstrating the snares and pitfalls of a violent lifestyle, we were not devoting a significant amount of energy to an alternative. While there are many causes and factors that contribute to juvenile delinquency, the most effective way to intervene in destructive behavior is to provide support and nurturance while developing young people's positive leadership capacity. If youth do not have a positive outlet to assert themselves, often times, they utilize their leadership abilities in negative and destructive ways. With this realization, we changed the focus of all our violence prevention programs from violence to leadership development. In 2006, the Hunters Point Family launched the Hunters Point Girls Leadership Institute and the Hunters Point Young Mens' Leadership Institute to challenge our youth to examine the destructive norms for young African American youth in the BVHP community, rediscover their heritage, and to honor their community, their families, and themselves.

The Leadership Institutes empower youth to discover their innate gifts and use their experiences to refine their character, so that they may experience the power of transcendence and transformation. They work with young people to develop healthy relationships, to embrace responsibility, and provide leadership opportunities within their community. Thus, the Leadership Institutes don't just warn young people about the risks of street life and "gang-banging" it provides an alternative, by

building the participants identity, providing a sense of family, and employment opportunities that compete with the street economy.

Like the violence prevention programs, the Leadership Institutes provide intensive case management, individual and group counseling, and life-skills that focus on effective communication, conflict resolution, and an exploration of personal values; however, the curriculum heavily emphasized setting educational and career goals, and all participants are required to participate in community service projects and maintain summer employment. Staff work with youth to set personal goals and develop a step-by-step plan to achieve them. These accomplishments transform youth from passive individuals who complain about their circumstances, to active participants in the creation of their life outcomes. The Leadership Institutes also host bi-annual Leadership camps where youth participate in intensive team building exercises, a challenge ropes course where to build self-esteem and develop leadership skills, and a series of workshops on non-violent conflict resolution, where youth learn strategies to transform potentially explosive situations into positive learning experiences that develop personal strength and empowerment.

The following activities are highlights of the community service projects and outcomes from the Hunters Point Youth Leadership Institutes:

- Every year, at least 50 youth work in the Double Rock or Adam Rogers organic farms growing food for the community.
- Four youth started their own business, “Somethin’ Fresh” delivering fresh, organic fruit to Bayview Hunters Point residents.
- Four youth operated their own stall at the Bayview Hunters Point Farmers Market.
- Ten youth performed a needs assessment and outreach campaign for the BVHP Farmers Market as part of a federal research contract with the Seven Principles Project.
- Every year ten youth work in the Hunters Point Food Pantry where they distributed free groceries to residents of the Hunters Point public housing community.
- Youth participated in the design of the Hunters Point Family’s new website: www.hunterspointfamily.org.
- 5 youth took classes at BayCat to create an informational DVD about the Hunters Point Family agency.

Need to add in more accomplishments. Takai please add some more bullet points such as Hastings program, etc.

In addition to transforming our programming and services around the same time, HPF also became more intentional about developing the leadership of our youth in order to lead the agency. While we had informally encouraged our youth to take classes and participate in internship opportunities that would prepare them for full-time positions within the agency, in 2006, HPF implemented a policy that alumni, who qualify, would receive preference in hiring for all new positions that opened up within the agency. The Executive Directors informed staff to begin grooming youth who demonstrated exceptional leadership and organizational skills for Case Management, administrative, and bookkeeping positions within the agency. This strategy proved to be successful. Our goal is that Hunters Point Family alumni will eventually fill every single position within the agency. In 2010, 40%

of all HPF positions were filled by HPF alumni, including Case Manager Positions, Bookkeeper, Administrative Assistant, Facilities Manager, Activities Coordinator, and Garden Coordinator.

In October 2008, the Hunters Point Family (HPF) underwent a strategic planning process in order to create a plan to guide the organization for the next three years (2009 – 2011). The process spanned a course of six months, during which the staff, board, participants, alumni, parents, community partners, and funders were engaged in interviews and conversations about the future direction for the Hunters Point Family. Developing leadership opportunities for alumni were among the primary goals of the strategic plan. The following goals and outcomes from HPF's Strategic Plan demonstrate the importance of leadership development among HPF participants:

- **Goal 2010:** Begin to focus on political education and activism work with the participants and alumni.
- **Outcome 2010:** Develop a political education curriculum
- **Goal 2010:** Support Alumni [with funding and/or staff] to develop their own programming and micro-enterprises.
- **Outcomes 2010:** Create a group of alumni to design the program structure and expectations.
- **Goal 2010:** Incubate and support micro-enterprise development by formalizing the program and partnerships.
- **Outcomes 2010:** Develop partnerships with local micro enterprise support entity and connect alumni with them for training and support. [Small Business Commission, Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center, REDF, NFTE]; Work with alumni to develop their ideas into business plans; Identify sources to fund a small venture fund for alumni who have business ideas.

As a result of the strategic planning process, it became clear that the Hunters Point Family is ready for the next step in our evolution: Developing an economic infrastructure to support our social infrastructure. Our youth identified starting their own businesses and/or a social enterprise among their top priorities; thus, the agency's effort to prepare our youth for positions of leadership takes on a new urgency.

The Hunters Point Family is currently engaged in launching two social enterprises: The Get Fresh Juice Bar & Café and Sol Power Green Audition and Installation. The social enterprises will not only provide job training and employment, but teach hundreds of our youth how to develop, manage, and maintain a business. Some of these youth will then manage and grow the company and many more will gain the confidence, skill, and experience needed to start their own businesses. The Hunters Point Family will use our social enterprise to create a paradigm shift in the mentality of our young people. By experiencing and participating the start-up and implementation of the social enterprise, they will experience what so many other young people take for granted: The possibility of realizing their dreams. When people are working and are building a solid foundation for their families, their attitudes change and their lives change. The Hunters Point Family is working to restore the hope and vitality to the African-American community within Bayview Hunters Point.

A Legacy of Leadership and Love from Takai & Lena

"I'm clear that I'm leaving a legacy. I can't afford to be corrupted or to be weak because this is the legacy that I'm leaving to the children."

When working with young people, one must be mindful of everything. They watch your every move to determine the quality of your heart and intentions, they trust you, they rely on you, and they emulate you. Adults working with young people become role models from whom they base their version of themselves on. With this comes great responsibility. At the Hunters Point Family, we are not sitting in cubicles or making widgets. We are shaping and molding human beings. Because we work with high-risk youth, our jobs take on an ever keener sense of urgency, because many of our participants have a far greater capacity for destructive behaviors than the average young person. On the other hand, they also have a greater capacity for developing leadership, wisdom, and compassion that often accompanies particularly challenging life circumstances. When so much hangs in the balance, it is vital that one approach this work with a deep sense of reverence and consciousness.

The Hunters Point Family was founded on and continues to operate from a profound love. It is fueled by hope and a vision for a future of abundance in every sense of the word. It is a spiritual work- a calling. Many have described the Hunters Point Family as a movement, the unifying force in the Bayview Hunters Point community, for the people, by the people.

Like raising a child, the leadership of the Hunters Point Family has been guided by the needs of the youth, the development of the agency, and the healing of the community. We do everything in our power to ensure our children are loved and nurtured, secure resources to facilitate their growth and development, ensure they become balanced and fulfilled adults, prepare them for raising a family of their own, and securing a career that is consistent with their skills and interests. The work is constantly evolving. There is always more to do and more that can and should be improved. Sometimes it feels as if we are always swimming against the current because so many of our children are so far behind, but we are not discouraged. We work hard to bring our best selves to the work and we are far from perfect. We make mistakes often, we have character flaws, and sometimes we struggle to find the strength to keep going, but our love for our children will not allow us to quit. We continue to seek the light, like a flower always reaches for the sun.

Today, the Hunters Point Family is changing the lives of hundreds of youth and families in the Bayview Hunters Point community. Tomorrow, thousands of people will benefit from that transformation. Our legacy is leading our people to the proverbial land flowing with milk and honey. For over 40 years we have been lost in a "desert" of toxic waste and pollution. We have survived on processed foods devoid of nutritional content, breathed air contaminated with the stench from the bowels of the entire city and the metallic waste belched up by the City's power plant. The minds of our mothers and fathers have been attacked with crack and our children have turned on their parents and themselves. Many have lost hope of ever finding our way home and some have lost faith, but we are still here. Through all the destruction and devastation we have learned that our greatest strength, our most valuable asset, and our ultimate power is our love for each other. This is our salvation and our light out of the desert. This is the power that the Hunters Point Family is built on and illuminates for our children and the community. The Hunters Point Family's legacy will be to

harness this power to restore the health and vitality to our community through our youth development programs, job programs, and businesses. We will use these resources to literally rebuild our community, in harmony with each other and the earth, so that generations of our children will have a place and a space where they will thrive right here in Bayview Hunters Point, San Francisco.