Community Assessment Internship
*Neighborhood House*

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What is Neighborhood House?

- Non-profit in St. Paul, Minnesota
- Started from Mount Zion Temple in 1897 by helping Jewish and Eastern European Immigrants
- Now helps all immigrant communities in St. Paul from 6 different locations (W 7th being one)
- Programs offered:
  - Youth Leadership
  - Adult Education
  - College Access
  - Career Education and Employment Services
  - Food Support
  - Family Centers
  - Community Health
  - Parent and Early Childhood Education
West Seventh Corridor Expansion Project

- Goal: Conduct research in order to gather information on what the needs are of the community to be followed by updated services and programs offered there.
- A small family center and food shelf located in one location of the neighborhood
- Use a classroom from a local school for early childhood development
- Use space in an apartment close to the family center for adult education classes
- Services are spread out, locations need to be updated
- Phase 1 consists of collecting that information by administering surveys through canvassing and focus groups = Needs Assessment
What is a Needs Assessment?

- What is vs. What should be
- Pre Assessment, Needs Assessment, Post Assessment

**Pre Assessment**
Find out what is already known

**Need Assessment**
Conduct new research

**Post Assessment**
Develop and finalize a plan, monitor and evaluate
My Job

- Pre Assessment - look into other social service providers in area (Jewish Community Center, Jewish Family Center, Shalom Home, Fort Road Federation), find demographic info
- Plan and organize meetings with board members and supervisors
- Write up questionnaires, plan and execute canvassing efforts

Example of a survey

Questions

1. Have you taken a survey with us before in the past two weeks? (YES or NO)
2. Have you heard of Neighborhood House? What do you know about it?
3. Have you in the past used services provided by Neighborhood House? (YES or NO)
4. Do you currently use any of the services provided by neighborhood house? (YES or NO)
   a. If so, which ones? (List of services available)
   b. (Only if you said yes to the first question) On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very dissatisfied to 5 being very satisfied), how helpful have our services been for you? (Answer: )
5. I’d like to ask you some questions about several services we could offer or extend.
   a. How often do you visit the family center in (street name)? (not at all, once a year, once a month, a couple times a month, once a week, more than once a week)
      i. Would you like to see the family center open for more hours a day? (YES or NO)
      ii. If yes, what additional hours (1-2, 3-5, 6-10, 10+)
   b. Do you have children who need childcare? (YES or NO)
   c. When has finding childcare been a barrier for you? (year round, Part of school year, Summer only)
   d. Do you feel employment assistance would be useful to you? (YES or NO)
   e. Is transportation a barrier you face often? (YES or NO)

Name (First and Last):
Email (optional):
Phone (optional):

Example of a survey
What I learned

- Large portion of children not enrolled in pre-school (42%)
- Majority renters
- Two largest ethnic groups are East African and Latino
- Around 43% have a higher degree

Census Tract (Shepard rd., 35 E, St. Paul Ave., Edgecumb)
Source: Statistical Atlas

- Needs of the community:
  - Childcare
  - Immigration
  - Employment
  - Community gathering space

- Skills for planning out an event and organize volunteers
- Engaging with a community and making lasting connections

A look into one of the more updated food markets
Relationships and Place Matter

Relationships Matter
- Engage with the community
- Real people with legitimate struggles
- Important to get feedback from participants
- Important to have community leading alongside the team
- I collaborated with a woman who worked the family center at W 7th which allowed me to have her as a contact and help with translations

Place Matters
- Each community worked with has a different story
- Important to recognize that needs change as communities change
- West Seventh community is very tightly knit with smaller community circles within
Tips for Future Fellows at Neighb

- Use online resources about needs assessments and gathering information
- Take notes on everything
- Make check-lists before focus groups and canvassing events
- Don’t be afraid to ask a lot of questions
- Get to know community well
As the Project Moves Along...

- I have helped them lay foundations for ongoing research
- I participated in one surveying effort and there will be more to come as the project moves along
- The connections we’ve made in the community throughout my time here will carry on and help with phase 2 and others to come