

**THE STRONG PARTNERSHIP
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PROJECT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE
AWARD NO. 90 DN 0158/01**

**KENTUCKY CABINET FOR HEALTH SERVICES, COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL HEALTH CARE
NEEDS**

This progress report is presented using the work plan as submitted in the 360 Family Support Grant application. A written narrative follows each objective and corresponding activities. General observations and comments are noted at the end.

<i>WORK PLAN 9/30/03 – 9/30/04 BY CHRONOLOGICAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES- PROGRESS REPORT FOR FIRST QUARTER 10/1/03-12/31/03</i>			<i>TIMEFRAME (QUARTERS)</i>			
<i>OBJECTIVE</i>	<i>ACTIVITY</i>	<i>RESPONSIBLE PARTY(S)</i>	<i>1 S T</i>	<i>2 N D</i>	<i>3 R D</i>	<i>4 T H</i>
1.0 Develop an active partnership of key stakeholders (including local officials, the State Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), the State Protection & Advocacy Agency (P&A), the University Center on Developmental Disabilities (IHDI), and others to include disability-related service providers, advocacy groups, family support groups, family strengthening groups, faith based initiatives, and others) in the	1.1 Convene a steering group consisting of CSHCN, Seven Counties, KY-SPIN, IHDI, State DD Council, Protection & Advocacy, Louisville-Metro Cabinet for Health & Human Services, Council for Retarded Citizens Faith-Based Initiative; Center for Accessible Living; FIND; Metro United Way, Workforce Development Cabinet, and Volunteers of America to develop the Family Assistance Grant Application.	CCSHCN, Seven Counties, KY-SPIN	8 / 0 3			
	1.2 Identify agencies, organizations, faith-based organizations and families to service on the center planning group to be called the "Louisville-Metro STRONG Partnership". The Partnership will include individuals with disabilities and their families from the three NP service areas who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, or cultural minorities.	Steering Group	X			
	1.3 Contact and secure a commitment to collaborate from the individuals who will serve on the Louisville-Metro STRONG Partnership	Steering Group and Partnership Members	X			

planning process so that the one-stop transition resource center receives widespread support and recognition.	1.4 Inform and educate Partnership members about the Neighborhood Place philosophy, mission, vision, and goals, & the history of its development. Describe the existing management, administrative, and advisory structures (ie, the Community Councils) and the existing services that each provides.	CCSHCN, Seven Counties, and KY SPIN with the assistance of NP Center Directors and Community Council members from NP SouthCentral, Bridges of Hope, & Ujima	X			
	1.5 Create a communications strategy for informing and updating stakeholders and other interested parties, including families in the 3 NP service areas, other families who express an interest, Community Councils, etc.	Steering Group	X			
	1.5.1 Maintain a list-serve; post updates to the web sites of CCSHCN, Seven Counties & KY-SPIN. Post regular updates to the Metro community collaboration newsletter which is distributed to agencies and households.	CCSHCN, Seven Counties & KY-SPIN	X	X	X	X
	1.5.2 Develop bi-monthly newsletters for families and others who do not have internet access and/or request this format.	KY-SPIN	X	X	X	X

1st Quarter Progress Report (10/1/03-12/31/03) and for the period including the preparation of this report (1/28/04):

Objective 1.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- CCSHCN, Seven Counties, and KY-SPIN execute the Partnership Agreement for the STRONG Partnership.**
 The Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN), the lead agency as designated by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health Services, executed the partnership agreement that was developed during August 2003 and submitted as part of the grant application. CCSHCN modified an existing contract with Seven Counties Services to award family support grant funds. Seven Counties entered into contract with KY-SPIN to award family support grant funds. (Note: By order of the Governor, the Cabinet for Health Services officially became the Cabinet for Health and Family Services in December 2003. This reflects the consolidation of the Cabinet for Health Services and the Cabinet for Families and Children. The consolidation has implications for the family support grant since CCSHCN

and the Department for Community Based Services, which is a founding partner of the Neighborhood Place, are now in the same cabinet.) A copy of the partnership agreement is included under Attachment A.

- **Staff hired to support the grant's implementation.** As of December 1, 2003, the project was fully staffed. Seven Counties Services and KY-SPIN hired project staff to coordinate the grant's implementation. CSHCN designated a staff member, paid through another funding source, to share coordination duties with project staff from Seven Counties and KY-SPIN. A brief bio for each follows:

Deanna Lockhart, BA, MEd., is the STRONG project coordinator for Seven Counties Services. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and a Master's Degree in Community Counseling. She brings first-hand knowledge of the Neighborhood Place centers as she was employed as family services worker at the Neighborhood Place Bridges of Hope. She also worked for the Jefferson County School System, which is a partner agency of Neighborhood Place, as a transition liaison. Her primary duties as a transition liaison were in job development and job coaching for students with developmental disabilities.

Rhonda Logsdon, BBA, is the STRONG project coordinator for KY-SPIN. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and extensive experience in working with children and youth with disabilities and their families as a staff member of KY-SPIN. During her tenure at KY-SPIN, she was training coordinator for the federally funded parent training information grant. She has also worked as a family consultant and as a volunteer while at KY-SPIN. Rhonda is one of five children, three of whom have disabilities.

Lee Gordon, BS, MPA, is the STRONG project coordinator for CSHCN. Lee, who is also the transition administrator for CSHCN, holds a Bachelor's of Health Science Degree and a Master's Degree in Public Administration. As transition administrator for CSHCN, he works with children, adolescents, families, support groups, and service providers to help ensure that youth with disabilities who exit the Commission at age 21 or younger are adequately supported to transition from pediatric to adult health care, from school to work, and to independent living. Earlier in his career, he was a nursing home administrator and thus brings experience in working with the elderly who are disabled as well as youth with disabilities. Lee is a quadriplegic as a result of a car accident that occurred when he was 18 years old.

- **The three coordinating agencies took steps to build the infrastructure required to support the grant's implementation.** Our grant is unique in that we are employing a collaborative staffing model that involves a state agency, a regional quasi-governmental agency, and a not-for-profit parent organization. While we have worked collaboratively on a number of initiatives, this project represents a new approach for each of us. As suggested by the literature, collaboration requires time. For this reason, we have spent more time on developing the project's infrastructure than was originally expected. Clarity in communications and assignment of staff roles and responsibilities and tasks has consumed a great deal of time but is essential to the project's success. Communication has been facilitated through the use of a list serve, but because of the number of stakeholders within our agencies as well as the STRONG Partnership membership, there have been breakdowns in our communications. We are working to develop a communications and decision-making structure to address these issues.

We anticipate that the communications and decision-making structures we develop during the planning process among the project's three coordinating agencies and the Neighborhood Place center directors and Managing Board should be transferable to the implementation and operation of the transition resource centers. This allows us the luxury of experimentation and design during the planning process as opposed to later during the implementation and operation when center staff and services potentially could be disrupted as we sort out these issues.

Because the STRONG Partnership embodies a community development approach, additional time also has been required to orient project staff to the planning model. This commitment of time during the start-up period will, no doubt, pay off later as staff gains comfort and experience in their roles.

KY-SPIN has hired a part-time secretary through grant funds to support the project. A standing meeting is held each Friday morning during which project staff from the 3 partner agencies meet to coordinate efforts. During the initial project start-up, staff are meeting several times each week but this is expected to taper off once the project is underway.

- **Communications (Obj 1.5).** A list serve has been developed for the STRONG Partnership to support communication. Each of the three project coordinators has been assigned to act as a liaison to one of the three Neighborhood Places and to the families and agencies in that area that participate in the Partnership. Plans are underway for website development. A notice of the Partnership's funding was submitted to the community collaboration newsletter, which

gets widespread distribution to agencies and governmental entities in the Metro area and also is accessible on the Internet. A communications strategy will be developed once we have engaged the three Neighborhood Place community councils and families residing in the three areas to determine their preferences for the types of information that they receive and the methods for receiving it.

- **Contact and secure a commitment to collaborate and serve on the Louisville Metro STRONG Partnership (Obj 1.2/ 1.3).** The agencies and individuals, which participated in the steering group during the grant's development in August 2003, have agreed to participate as members of the STRONG Partnership. The first STRONG Partnership meeting was held on January 13, 2004. (Partnership members at the time of the meeting are listed in Attachment B.) Partnership members were provided with an overview of the family support grant and a description of the STRONG Partnership planning process. (Copies of the PowerPoint handouts for each presentation are under Attachments C & D.) At the request of the grant's principle investigator, the Partnership agreed to postpone the next meeting until the Partnership is more inclusive of individuals with disabilities and their families from the three Neighborhood Place service areas, including those who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities. While partnership members were asked to assist in the recruitment of individuals to serve on the Partnership and its committees, the priority is on family recruitment. A committee has been charged with assisting the Partnership in recruiting individuals and in meeting the goal of inclusion. It is referred to as the Outreach, Recruitment, and Inclusion Committee. (A description of the committee's responsibilities is included under Attachment F.)
- **Meetings occurred with representatives from the Neighborhood Place Managing Board and Directors from Neighborhood Place Bridges of Hope, Ujima, and South Central prior to convening the STRONG Partnership.** Monthly meetings are now taking place among project staff, representatives from the Neighborhood Place Managing Board, and the three Neighborhood Place directors. The meetings are critical in that staff must have a complete understanding and appreciation for the Neighborhood Place concept and its operations as they implement the planning process. The response of the Neighborhood Place Managing Board and center directors has been overwhelmingly positive and receptive to the addition of services for individuals and their families with disabilities. Because many of the Neighborhood Place centers have limited space for additional staff, their willingness to include programs that serve individuals with disabilities has added significance.

Project staff will be meeting with each of the Neighborhood Place Community Councils for Bridges of Hope, South Central, and Ujima to solicit participation and build linkages with the STRONG Partnership. Similarly, the Neighborhood Place center directors indicated that they envision STRONG as a vehicle for recruiting individuals with disabilities and their families to serve on the Neighborhood Place Community Councils.

Once the Partnership reaches its desired level of inclusion, its next meeting will focus on the Neighborhood Place in a session presented by the Neighborhood Place Directors. The reason for deferring this meeting until more families are represented is because of the importance of this meeting to the planning process. A thorough understanding of the Neighborhood Place is critical to the planning process. (Obj 1.4)

Project staff will attend the February orientation training for new Neighborhood Place staff. In April, following completion of a community assets mapping process and before planning begins that is specific to the operations of the transition resource center, STRONG Partnership members who agree to participate on the Program Development Committee will attend the orientation training for new Neighborhood Place staff.

The STRONG Partnership will interface with the Neighborhood Place Training Committee throughout the planning process to ensure that training and staff development initiatives occur to the extent possible within the framework of the Neighborhood Place training framework.

- **The planning process was further defined as roles and responsibilities were clarified.** As readers of this report know, it is one thing to develop a grant, and another to implement it. So it is with the STRONG Partnership grant. For this reason we are now developing what we hope will be a "turnkey" planning model to assist the Partnership members and committees to guide committee work leading to a comprehensive plan for the transition resource centers operations. (Committee descriptions are presented under Attachment E). Staff is currently involved in the development of the model which will provide a process outline and worksheets to assist committee members in their work. This, too, represents an education process for project staff as they are introduced to the process and tools for use in participatory community planning. And, it will provide a useful tool for replication as we evaluate the project and extend the planning model for transition resource centers in one-stop centers to other communities in our state.

<p>2.0 Establish a shared vision for the transition resource center and the expected outcomes for children and families served by the center.</p>	<p>2.1 Present an informational session on transition to the STRONG Partnership to develop a basis of common understanding of transition as a life-long process that begins at birth and continues throughout the life-cycle; the principles and practice of self-determination; and the services and supports that support successful transition, including person-centered planning.</p>	<p>CCSHCN, KY-SPIN, IHDI, DDC</p>	<p>X</p>			
	<p>2.2 Define a shared vision and goals for the Neighborhood Place Transition Resource Center</p>	<p>STRONG Partnership</p>	<p>X</p>			
	<p>2.3 Conduct focus groups and key informant interviews in the three NP areas to determine the level of awareness about transition as a developmental process across the life-span and the principles of self-determination and the age-based resources and supports that are available to support transition. Groups will be conducted among persons with disabilities and their families who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, or cultural minorities; NP staff; and other agency/ community resources and supports (including family support and faith-based organizations). Present findings to the STRONG Partnership.</p>	<p>CCSHCN, KY-SPIN & Seven Counties with assistance from IHDI</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>X</p>		
	<p>2.4 Review existing Federal and State laws and compile a detailed summary of: 2.1.3(a) Funding streams for services and supports 2.1.3(b) Legal and policy barriers to achieving self-sufficiency 2.1.3(c) Eligibility criteria and other program requirements that may pose an obstacle to targeted families. Present findings to the STRONG Partnership.</p>	<p>CCSHCN, KY-SPIN & Seven Counties with assistance from P&A</p>		<p>X</p>		

	2.5 Identify and develop a data-base of existing state and local resources, including information on services and supports that are available from community groups and faith-based organizations, including those that provide family strengthening services. Present findings to the STRONG Partnership. (This will form the initial database for the center, leading to a catalog of services and supports for the staff members and targeted families.)	KY-SPIN & Seven Counties		X	X	
	2.6 Identify gaps and barriers in services & supports based on developmental stage, age, etc.	STRONG Partnership		X	X	

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Objective 2.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

No activity to-date. Project staffing was not completed until December 1, 2003. Efforts by the three coordinating agencies have focused on developing the infrastructure required to support the project and in recruiting Partnership members, with emphasis now on recruiting individuals with disabilities and their families from the three Neighborhood Place service areas, including those who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities. Once we have obtained an inclusive membership, the Partnership will meet to study the Neighborhood Place model. The next Partnership meeting following the Neighborhood Place model will focus on transition and the principles of self-determination as a foundation for determining the services and supports to be provided through the resource centers (Obj 2.1 & 2.2).

3.0 Target individuals with disabilities and their families who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, or cultural minorities to include African-America families and refugee and immigrant families from Spanish speaking counties, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, and Sub-Sahara Africa.	3.1 Define the criteria to be used to target 50 families for services, including development of the Individual Family Plan, during the center's first year of operation.	STRONG Partnership			X	
	3.2 Conduct an analysis of existing transition resources and determine current utilization by targeted families in each of the three NP areas. May include collection of service utilization data, key informant interviews, etc. Report findings to the STRONG Partnership.	KY SPIN & Seven Counties with the assistance of the STRONG Partnership			X	
	3.3 Conduct focus groups and key informant interviews among targeted families, NP staff, and staff from other agencies/organizations serving targeted families to determine knowledge and attitudes about transition planning and self-determination practices; cultural and family beliefs that influence transition planning and self-determination; and the types & levels of expectations that families, service providers and others have for persons with disabilities.	CCSHCN, KY SPIN, Seven Counties with the assistance of IHDI			X	
	3.4 Define the outcomes that will occur as a result of providing services to the 50 targeted families.	STRONG Partnership			X	

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Objective 3.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- No activity to-date. Project staffing was not completed until December 1, 2003. Efforts by the three coordinating agencies have focused on developing the infrastructure required to support the project and in recruiting Partnership members, with emphasis now on recruiting individuals with disabilities and their families from the three Neighborhood Place service areas, including those who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities.

<p>4.0 Develop a one-stop service prototype and operating policies and procedures for the NP transition support center that operates within the NP framework; is integrated with existing NP services; creates new working relationships and operating assumptions; and delivers high-quality family supports and services that support families and help them to reach their potential.</p>	<p>4.1 Develop a culturally sensitive and appropriate outreach and recruitment plan for targeted families to include (but not limited to): strategies for reaching formal and in-formal community leaders in the 3 NP areas, and other potential referral sources such as schools, employers, health care providers, mental health providers, churches, libraries, housing developments, aging-services and nutrition programs, child care providers, day centers, pharmacies, etc.</p>	Outreach and Referral Committee			X	X
	<p>4.2 Define the process that will be used to guide intake, assessment, and determination of eligibility.</p>	Intake and Eligibility Committee		X	X	X
	<p>4.3 Describe the process to be used for service planning, including assessment and person-centered planning models that are age and developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive.</p>	Services Planning and Delivery Committee		X	X	X
	<p>4.4 Describe the process for service delivery, including the services and supports, which are age and developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive, that will be provided to support and strengthen families.</p>	Services Planning and Delivery Committee		X	X	X
	<p>4.5 Establish procedures within the NP framework for making referrals to other agencies and organizations (within NP and outside NP), including the sharing of personal information.</p>	Services Planning and Delivery & Records & Information Mgmt committees			X	X
	<p>4.6 Develop policies and procedures within the NP framework for maintaining records, assuring privacy, and authorizing their release to someone other than the family.</p>	Services Planning and Delivery & Records & Information Mgmt committees			X	X
	<p>4.7 Determine if funds will be available to purchase services/supports listed on the IFP if there is no other payment source and/or to provide direct cash assistance. If yes, specify the source of these funds and develop detailed policies & procedures to guide use.</p>	Services Planning & Delivery			X	X
	<p>4.8 Determine the required staffing; specify the level of training, experience, and professional competencies required for each classification.</p>	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X

	4.8.1 Develop a policy within the NP framework that provides for confidentiality and respect for families with regards to privacy.	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X
	4.8.2 Create position descriptions and develop performance indicators for evaluating employee work performance for each position	Personnel & Training & Quality & Outcomes committees			X	X
	4.9 Define data and other information that are to be collected; define how it will be collected and reported.	Quality & Outcomes & Records & Information Mgmt. committees			X	X
	4.10 Develop the prototype forms & other technical tools that will be required for the center's operation.	Records & Information Mgmt Committee			X	X
	4.11 Assess and develop a plan for the required information technology (including hardware and software) to support the center.	Records & Information Mgmt Committee			X	X
	4.12 Assess the space and equipment needs for the center's operation and develop a plan for acquiring these.	CCSHCN, Seven Counties & KY-SPIN working in conjunction with the 3 NP Center Directors & NP Managing Bd.			X	X

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Objective 4.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- No activity to-date. Project staffing was not completed until December 1, 2003. Efforts by the three coordinating agencies have focused on developing the infrastructure required to support the project and in recruiting Partnership members, with emphasis now on recruiting individuals with disabilities and their families from the three Neighborhood Place service areas, including those who are in poverty or from racial, ethnic, and cultural minorities.

5.0 Develop a training plan for training center staff, other Neighborhood Place staff, and for non-staff assisting families in other settings & environments.	5.1 Use key informant interviews and written questionnaires to asses the existing level of knowledge, attitudes, & skills of NP staff who will be assessing and referring families for center services and other non-staff who will be assisting families in other settings & environments. Compare this to the level required to identify need, make appropriate referrals, and deliver quality supports and services.	Personnel & Training Committee		X	X	X
	5.2 Validate findings through focus groups	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X
	5.3 Identify training needs & priorities and desired outcomes.	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X
	5.4 Identify training providers.	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X
	5.5 Develop a calendar of scheduled training within the Neighborhood Place framework.	Personnel & Training Committee			X	X

1st Quarter Progress Report (10/1/03-12/31/03) and for the period including the preparation of this report (1/28/04):

Objective 5.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- Limited activity to-date. Project staff will attend the February orientation training for new Neighborhood Place staff. In April, following completion of a community assets mapping process and before planning begins that is specific to the operations of the transition resource center, STRONG Partnership members who agree to participate on the Program Development Committee will attend the orientation training for new Neighborhood Place staff. A meeting also is being scheduled with the Neighborhood Place Training Committee to ensure that training and staff development initiatives occur to the extent possible within the framework of the Neighborhood Place training framework.

6.0 Develop a written plan for the transition resource center's implementation within the NP framework.	6.1 Each committee will compile and present their findings and recommendations to the STRONG Partnership for discussion and comment with agreement reached through modified consensus.	STRONG Partnership				X	
	6.2 A pilot will be conducted with at least three families (one in which the individual with a disability is a child; one in which it is a youth; and one in which it is an adult) who volunteer to go through the process, beginning with intake and continuing through the development of an IFP. A report from the pilot will be presented to the STRONG Partnership. Operating procedures may be referred back to the respective committees for review and revision as necessary.	CCSHCN, Seven Counties, KY-SPIN, Steering Group, Managing Board, and NP Center Directors					X
	6.3 A written plan is prepared that includes a timetable for implementing the one-stop center in the event that sufficient funding is acquired (which can be the basis for a Family Support implementation grant in the event that an RFP is issued.)	Steering Group NP Center Directors NP Managing Board					X
	6.3.1 The plan will detail funding needs, identify existing fund sources and/or in-kind contributions and secure commitment through MOUs (contingent upon the acquisition of an implementation grant or other funding sufficient to support implementation).	Steering Group, NP Center Directors, NP Managing Board					X

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Objective 6.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- No activity to-date.

<p>7.0 Evaluate the planning process at established intervals and create written documentation for use in replicating the planning process for a one-stop transition resource center in other Kentucky sites as well as other states.</p>	<p>7.1 Project staff will maintain minutes from Steering Group, STRONG Partnership, and committee meetings as well as reports from focus groups, key informant interviews, and process evaluation reports. The information will be compiled into a report on the planning process, including findings and recommendations to guide future planning initiatives, including replication in other sites.</p>	CCSHCH, Seven Counties & KY-SPIN	X	X	X	X
	<p>7.2 Criteria will be established by the Steering Group to use in determining the effectiveness of the process in providing a forum for meaningful participation; whether it meets stakeholder expectations; and the degree to which it is family-friendly, family-directed and supports family participation, etc.</p>	Steering Committee & IHDI	X			
	<p>7.3 On a quarterly basis, the Steering Group will assess and monitor the level of participation by the STRONG Partnership. Project staff will provide a verbal report to the Steering Group to include: targeted families and the supports that are being provided to facilitate their participation; attendance and other measures of engagement; the extent to which the process is on-schedule and remains focused; and whether satisfactory process is being made, etc.</p>	Steering Group & IHDI	X	X	X	X
	<p>7.4 At the beginning of the 3rd quarter, all participants will be asked to complete a written questionnaire to evaluate the planning process. The findings will be reviewed by the Steering Group and presented to the STRONG Partnership.</p>	Steering Group & IHDI			X	
	<p>7.5 Within one month from the end of the process, KY-SPIN will convene a focus group or conduct interviews with targeted families who participated in the process to evaluate the extent to which families perceived opportunity for meaningful participation, the degree to which supports (stipends, child care, etc.) supported their participation, and to solicit their overall comments and recommendations about the process. (Post 4th quarter)</p>	KY-SPIN & IHDI				X

	7.6 Within two months from the end of the process, CCSHCN will send a questionnaire to the STRONG Partnership to determine member satisfaction with the planning process. (Post-4 th quarter)	CCSHCN & IHDI				X
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1st Quarter Progress Report (10/1/03-12/31/03) and for the period including the preparation of this report (1/28/04):

Objective 7.0

Highlights from the first quarter include:

- Completion of Objectives 7.2 and 7.3 have been delegated to the Outreach, Recruitment, and Inclusion Committee. The committee will begin meeting in February 2004 to develop criteria from which to measure the effectiveness of the process in providing a forum for meaningful participation; whether it meets stakeholder expectations; and the degree to which it is family-friendly, family-directed and supports family participation.

Other positive developments that occurred in conjunction with the grant's implementation:

- Staff from the three coordinating agencies who have not previously had experience in community development and community planning are gaining essential skills that can be applied to future development efforts in their respective agencies.
- As a result of a conversation between a representative from the Department for Employment Services (DES) and a representative from the Mayor's office/Neighborhood Place Managing Board during an August 2003 meeting of the grant's steering group, DES now has staff assigned to the Neighborhood Place centers.
- At another STRONG-related meeting, CSHCN and the Jefferson County Public Schools had a preliminary discussion about ways in which CSHCN care coordinators can support children and youth with disabilities and their families and community schools in the implementation of the President's Education Initiative, No Child Left Behind. Because health plays such an important role in a child's ability to learn, and can impact the testing process, this is an area that we hope to continue to explore for potential partnership. Because the CSHCN has been traditionally viewed exclusively as a source for specialized medical services, the family support grant is opening doors for us to the non-medical community. This is crucial as we expand our organizational focus to focus on building communities and systems of care supportive of children and youth with disabilities and their families.
- The Metro United Way is undergoing a significant revision in its focus. The new focus is on community level impact and outcomes as opposed to a focus on client and family level-outcomes. Because of the STRONG focus on inclusion and building stronger neighborhoods in which persons with disabilities and their families actively participate in all aspects of community life, including civic engagement, Metro United Way has indicated an interest in working with STRONG to include one or more of their community solutions committee chairs in the STRONG Partnership and vice versa. This linkage may prove to be very important to the sustainability of the project as it represents access to individuals who represent a broader cross-section of our community, including private and corporate enterprises.

- The family support grant's principle investigator at CSHCN is developing an application for incentive funds from the Champions for Progress Center at the Early Intervention Research Institute, Utah State University. Funding is restricted to state children with special health care needs programs for use in strengthening community-based systems of care for children with special health care needs and their families. A portion of the grants funds would be used to support family participation in the STRONG Partnership, including membership on the Partnership and committees, participation in focus groups/key informant interviews and would cover transportation, stipends, child care (when it can not be obtained through the Neighborhood Place Bridges of Hope), respite care, etc. (It should be noted that family support grant funds are not sufficient to cover these items. Although KY-SPIN and Seven Counties Services have graciously offered to contribute funds to support family participation we would prefer that they not have to direct funds from other sources to this area.) A portion of the funds also would be directed to facilitation training and other process-related training as we collaboratively build an infrastructure to support meaningful family participation in the STRONG Partnership as well as for future family support and community-based initiatives.

PROBLEMS:

- As noted, we do not yet have the level of inclusion that we feel appropriate on the STRONG Partnership. As a result, Partnership meetings which were to focus on the Neighborhood Place and transition and self-determination (Objectives 1.4 and 2.1) and focus groups/key informant interviews are being deferred until February. At that time we are confident that we will have achieved a Partnership more inclusive of underserved and unserved families of individuals with disabilities.

SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS AND EVENTS:

- Focus group research and key informant interviews have not been initiated. Once these are implemented and progress is made in operations planning, we should have a number of significant findings to report.

DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES:

- As noted in Objective 1.5, the Partnership will be developing a communications strategy once focus groups and key informant interviews are conducted. Project planning notebooks are being prepared to guide the planning process. Other documentation including meeting notes (which indicate desired outcomes for the meeting and post-evaluation) is being maintained as part of our process evaluation. This will form the basis of our technical assistance and training plan for dissemination to other sites following implementation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

- We have no additional information to report in this area at this time.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR NEXT REPORTING PERIOD:

- Activities as planned and noted in the work plan will be undertaken. As a result of the information learned yesterday (1/29/04) in the ADD technical assistance conference call, we anticipate that we may be required to expedite the planning schedule in order to respond to the forthcoming RFP for the implementation grant. We are at present reviewing the work plan, including those tasks required of the committees, to reconsider the time frames. We do not, however, expect to change the planning process in any significant way as the action steps are very important to achieving our goals, which focus not only on the development of an operations plan for the transition resource center but also on the process of building inclusive neighborhoods.