FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER
COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN RESEARCH REPORT

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In January 2024, Family Service Rochester (FSR) received Sauer Family Foundation funding to explore and assess the creation of a family resource center in our community. The Project incorporated the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework. The Project employed a community co-design methodology.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS are community hubs that offer families various services and programs. They aim to strengthen families by providing support, resources, and activities. These centers offer services like parenting classes, child development programs, and connections to other helpful resources.

THE STRENGTHENING FAMILIES PROTECTIVE FACTORS framework is a research based, family-centered approach that builds protective factors in families, programs, and communities, and supports integrated prevention planning. The framework includes five protective factors. Research indicates these factors provide the best support to ensure that children thrive. It is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five protective factors:

1. Parental Resilience: The ability to cope and bounce back from all types of challenges

2. Social Connections: Friends, family members, neighbors, and others in a community who provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents

3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Adequate information about raising young children and expectations for their behavior and needs

4. Concrete Support in Times of Need: Access to basic needs, such as health care, mental health care and informal support such as emergency childcare and nutritional care.

5. Children's Social and Emotional Development: A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively

COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN creates rigorous and meaningful opportunities for community members to have a say in the community by leveraging their shared lived experiences. The co-design process is an equitable and mutually beneficial way to engage and empower marginalized and underserved communities.

In a co-design approach, community co-designers recruited from under-represented communities are conduits to difficult-to-reach community networks (friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, etc.). Individuals rooted in a specific cultural/language group or community are best positioned to serve members of those groups and community. Along with sharing language and culture, they are trusted partners and a bridge across culture.

Community co-designers employ their networks to access a much broader and more diverse collection of perspectives and experiences not usually accessible through other methods.

The Project recruited co-designers from the community with close attention paid to ensuring a diverse group of parents and caregivers was engaged. A co-designer job description and informational flyer were created and provided to key stakeholders to assist with direct asks of people they knew were passionate about the community. Interested participants contacted Kelli DeCook, the Project Lead to arrange a telephone interview where details about the co-design process were shared and a basic application was completed

The Project was conducted from February 15, 2024 through March 26, 2024.

COMMUNITY CO-DESIGN PROCESS

A community co-design structure is an iterative sequence of in-person workshops where a diverse collection of compensated community co-designers come together and collectively interpret information and insights as well as co-develop emerging avenues of inquiry.

Each in-person studio is followed by independent exploration sprints where community co-designers engage, collect insights, and develop ideas within their trusted networks (friends, families, neighbors, co-workers etc.) and bring them back to the next studio and so on. This allows each community co-designer to have trusted, in-depth explorations and conversations with community members that are often unreachable through other engagement or research approaches.

The design process is personalized as each community co-designer brings different expertise, skills, and personality traits.

Design facilitators connected one-on-one with co-designers in each iteration to offer support and guidance to develop customized approaches and tools that were culturally appropriate and effective.

The primary advantage of this structure is that it allows for the emergence of insights that would be inaccessible otherwise.

A full description of the community co-design process is available here: https://dmc.mn/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Community_CoDesign_Booklet.pdf

The Project process was comprised of 14 community co-designers. (Appendix 1) Each co-designer received a stipend of $500 for their participation. Half of which was received at their first design studio; the remainder at their final design studio.

The in-person studios occurred in the late afternoons and early evenings at the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1212 12th Ave NW, Rochester, Minnesota. Refreshments and meals were

provided. The FSR staff were present at the in-person studios. Transportation and childcare were provided for those community co-designers who requested it.

The community co-designers co-created the questions during the in-person studios for the subsequent two sprints.

During two independent exploration sprints, the community co-designers engaged 122 individuals from their networks of friends, families, and neighbors. (Appendix 2)

The first in-person studio included orientation to the Project and Community Co-Design Process and training for the independent exploration sprints. The following two in-person studios were comprised of facilitated discussions of community co-designer insights from their independent exploration sprints, reflections on the process, sharing emerging themes, and co-developing inquiries for the next sprint.

The in-person studio discussions were facilitated by FSR staff members Dave Beal, April Sutor, and Renaux Swancutt. All three are trained facilitators. Also present at the design studios were FSR Staff Kelli DeCook, project lead and Brooke Schmidt.

During the sprints the co-designers were supported with check-in calls from project staff.

SUMMARY OF DESIGN STUDIOS AND SPRINTS

In-person Design Studio 1: Setting context and building relationships | February 15, 2024

To orient the community co-designers to the themes of the project, they participated in a facilitated discussion of what families require to thrive and succeed. Here is a summary of their responses.

What does "family" mean?
- Togetherness   - Caring & support   - Safety
What do families need to thrive?
- Basic needs met   - Access to resources   - Resilience
What does parental success require?

- Asking for help - Access to resources - Education & counseling - Perseverance - Communication skills - Coping Skills	
What supports help families succeed?	
- Basic needs met - Self-care - Culturally specific - services	

Independent Exploration Sprint 1 | February 15, 2024 - March 5, 2024

Based on their discussion of what families require to thrive and succeed, the community co-designers co-created the following two research questions for use in conducting their first sprint:

1. What are the most challenging situations you face as a family and what helps you get through them?
2. What does our community do well to support children/families? Where can we improve?

In-person Design Studio 2: Co-developed insights and priorities | March 15, 2024

In their second design studio, the community co-designers engaged in a facilitated discussion based on the results of their first sprint. This discussion incorporated the Strengthening Families Protective Factors framework

What are the most challenging situations you face as a family and what helps you get through them?	
CHALLENGES	**SUPPORT**
Knowledge of parenting and child development	
- School readiness - Lack of parent involvement – present in the home, but too busy - Dealing with youth mental health	- Family - Friends - Financial resources

Concrete support in times of need	
- Food security, access to health care, opportunities in Spanish and other - language, transportation - Childcare for events, diapers wipe, food - Not know resources that are available/advocate for you - Resources for child who is disabled – - knowing what is available	- Accessing resources in the community that already exists, motivated and want to be part of the community, Spanish speakers get help from the community - Doctors sometimes have resources, but don't let you know - Church, PRS - Food support – EBT - St Vincent
Parental Resilience	
- Looking for job when have not had one for awhile - Being single dad	- Spirituality - Advocacy in the community
Social connections	
- Fellowship that involves children - No extended family - Death of a spouse	Church
Social and emotional competence of children	
- Childcare for kids under 5, sex/health classes for kids, afterschool programs, - Lack of services for social skills for kids, availability of psychology/social worker for kids	

What does the community need to improve its support for families?
- Access to resources   - Awareness   - Appropriateness   - Affordability   - Availability

Independent Exploration Sprint 2 | March 5, 2024 - March 26, 2024

Based on their discussion of what families require to thrive and succeed, the community co-designers co-created the following four research questions for use in conducting their second sprint:

1. When you think of a family resource center, what comes to mind?
2. If you could design a place like this for children and families, what would it be like, where would it be, what would happen there, what services would be present, how would you feel when coming inside, what would it be named?
3. What would motivate you to come to this place you just described?
4. What barriers would keep you from coming to this place you just described?

In-person Design Studio 3: Refined concepts and guiding principles | March 26, 2024

In their third and final design studio, the community co-designers engaged in a facilitated discussion based on the results of their second sprint. This discussion considered preferences for built and program characteristics of a local family resource center (FRC).

When you think of an FRC, what comes to mind?
 • Community • Inclusivity • Support • Safety • Resources
Where would it be?
 • Location has free parking • Central location • Multiple locations • Mobile locations • Not a shared space with another organizations (e.g. government office, church) • Accessible
What would happen there? What services would be present?
 A broad range of services, activities, information, and education that support children and parents.

How would you feel coming inside?
- Comfortable   - Calm   - Safe   - Welcome   - Respected
What would motivate you to come to this place you just described?
- No or low cost   - Welcoming   - Useful
What barriers would keep you from coming to this place you just described?
- Cost   - Lack of childcare   - Location   - Not useful   - Inconvenient

PROJECT FINDINGS

Finding 1

At present there are gaps and shortfalls in access to resources that support families experiencing risks that hinder their well-being and healthy development.

Finding 2

There is an expressed need for access to a broad range of services, activities, information, and education that support children and parents.

There are no clearly identified priorities or preferences regarding these services, activities, information, and education.

Finding 3

There is support for creating a center where the resources are available to mitigate the risks experienced by families and promote their well-being and healthy development.

This center should be a broadly welcoming, safe space, that can respond to culturally specific needs and supports. Resources should be inexpensive to access.

Finding 4

The center should be an accessible, "non-shared" space with no governmental or religious affiliation.

There is no consensus as to the location of the center, but it is clear that convenience is important. The prospect of some "mobility" of service delivery/access is attractive.

The availability of free parking and transit access is strongly preferred.

Finding 5

A parental advisory council should be convened to help clarify clearly priorities or preferences regarding services, activities, information, and education.

This advisory council should also consult on the center location and design.
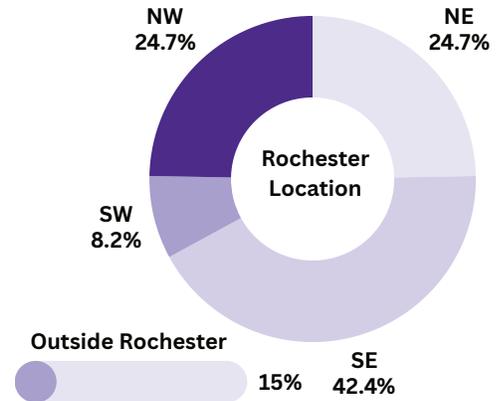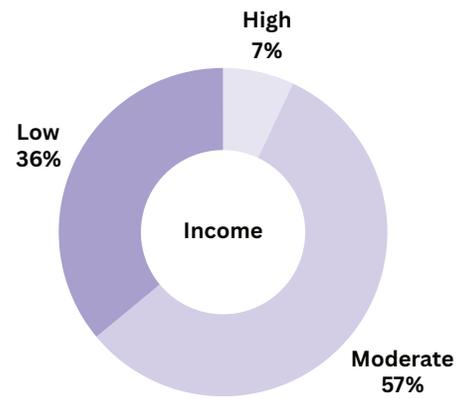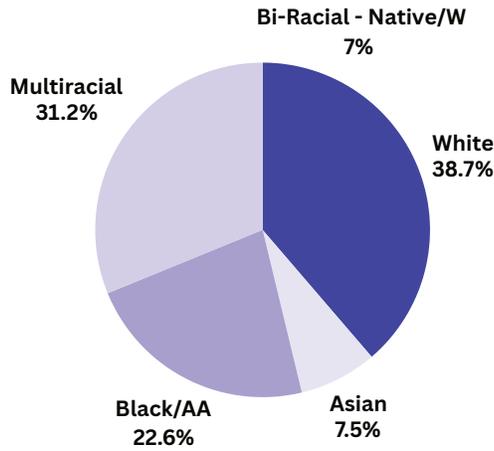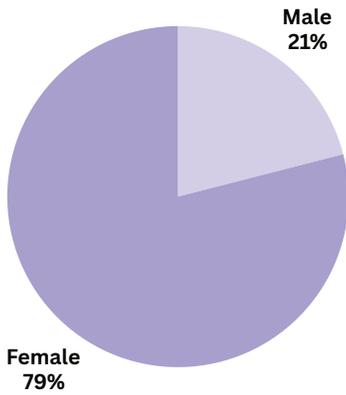
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Appendix 1

Co-Designers

14

Gender (pie chart)
- Male 21%
- Female 79%

Race/Ethnicity (pie chart)
- Bi-Racial - Native/W 7%
- White 38.7%
- Asian 7.5%
- Black/AA 22.6%
- Multiracial 31.2%

Income (donut chart)
- High 7%
- Low 36%
- Moderate 57%

Single Parent
71%

LGBTQIA+
7%

Rochester Location (donut chart)
- NW 24.7%
- NE 24.7%
- SW 8.2%
- SE 42.4%

Outside Rochester
15%

Appendix 2

Community Participants

122

Male
18%

Female
82%

American Indian
2.7%

Multiracial
5.5%

Black
30%

White
57.3%

Asian
4.5%

High
14%

Low
35%

Income

Moderate
51%

Single Parent

52%

LGBTQIA+

7%

NE
11.6%

NW
42.1%

Rochester Location

SE
23.2%

SW
23.2%

Outside Rochester

5%
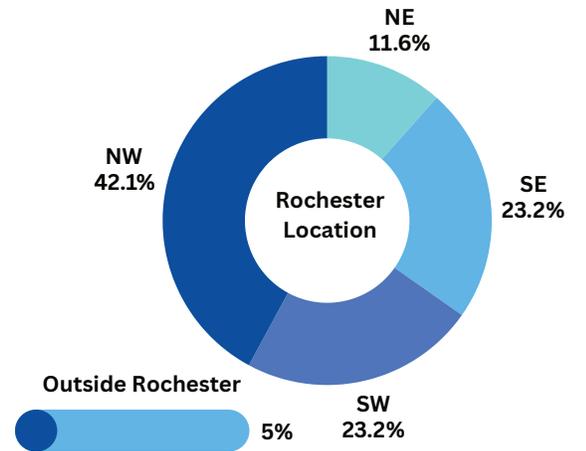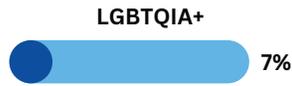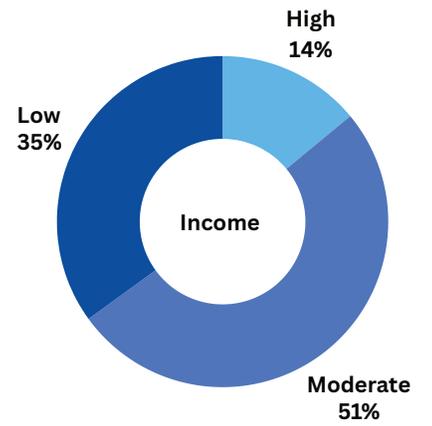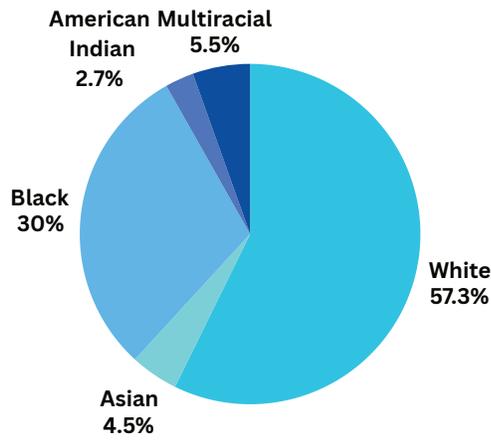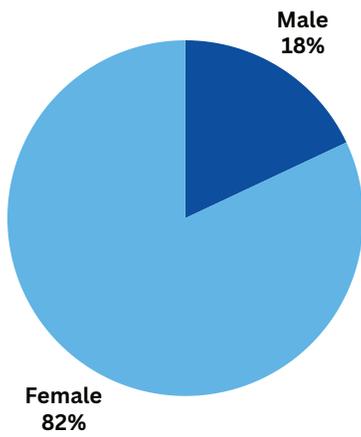
Appendix 3

Design Studio #3 Community Co-Designer Post-It Notes Input:

What Would Happen There [FRC] ? Programs/Services/Activities

Multi-purpose Event Space
- Parent support Group / Resource center
- Interpreter service
- Program with not many restrictions
- Knowledgeable staff
- Actionable steps/resources
- Family Conflict Resolution
- Parenting Classes -Focus on child/youth/parents development
  - Parenting in real time with follow up
  - Parental resiliency classes
  - Two parent household support
- Crisis response Team Active listeners
- Recovery Resources – Peer Recovery support
  - Family -to-family processing feedback from each other
- Highlighted topic resources of the month
- Therapy
- Social Worker Services
  - Foster Adoption Services Information
  - Domestic violence Resources/friend/family/work
  - Child Protection space for an in between while working out safety plan
  - Counselling
  - Elder Care Services
- Community Baby Shower
  - Quality clothing
- Baby/children exchange for resources – swap
- Youth Homelessness
- Café
- Care coordinator – help people find access to different organization
- Community Zoom Group Option/helpful for those with social anxiety
- Technology Access/Technology Hub/Internet connection
- Internship Programs
- Tutoring Centre
- Goal Planning

- Programs with in don't have many restrictions
- Automotive class

Housing Information
- Support regarding: Rental, Eviction, and Tenants rights
- Rent-a-buddy
- Utilities

Resources
- Central location for all resources
- Resources for Fathers
- Help with filling out assistance forms/paperwork
- Universal assistance application
- Elder care services
- Real people to navigate resources
  - Waitlists, funding availability, program statuses

Support Group
- Disability Support Group
- Grief Counselling
- Human trafficking education
- Seminars/ education / sport mentorship /Interactive learning zone
- Sustainable practices – ex. Fill station eco friendly
- Community gardening
-

Legal services
- Custody Issue
- Safe place for visitation time between parents/guardian
- Drop off /pick up safe/ community

Employment resources
- Employment opportunities for parents at FRC not employment support
- Assistance with job finding
  - Application Process

Children Activities /Events
- Indoor play space
- Sensory, Learning Art / creative art studio
- Sports Class

- Self Esteem Classes
- Emotional Intelligence class for kids and everyone
- SEL classes for kids
- Talent show, Toys, kids' friendly games, dancing, painting, baking classes
- Playful outdoor space
- Childcare/Baby sitting services
- Family Friendly adventure
- Coordinated outings (Incorporate small businesses

Transportation
- Volunteer drivers/shuttle (Community agent - drunk driving/ CD)
- Some type of transportation for events/classes

Food shelf
- An actual person to help guide , point you in the right direction
- Services for food
- Quality food pantry (including cold items)
- Coffee, food, cooking classes
- Food security
- Formula donations

Health Services
- Partner with dentist doctors – certified
- Health connection community

Financial Help
- Financial help for all – not just low-income individuals
- Financial freedom classes
- Financial literacy workshop
- Financial adviser
- Financial planning

What would it look/feel like on the inside?
- Looks more like a home than a place of business
- Central location
- Make individuals feel valued, respected, and important
- Wide range of hours
- Comfortable seating
  - Comfortable

- - Inviting furniture
    - Homey
    - Warm/comforting
    - Welcoming/non-judgmental
    - Welcoming to young adults
- Welcoming/comfort level
- Inclusive public space
- Like family – love, respect, supportive
- Inclusive
- Calm atmosphere
- Not obligated
- Beneficial
- Natural lighting, sun through big windows, people see through, one-way visibility
- Soft calming smells (nothing harsh)
- Safe space for kids and families
- Friendly
- Couple/few classrooms, several offices – all private options
- Family lounge area
- Calm colors
  - Bright, happy colored walls
- Soothing lighting
- Pleasant music
- Elevator music (calming instrumental)
- Extremely kid friendly
- Place separate for children to play
- Lactation room space
- Shower room
- Indoor play place (swings, climbing stuff, trampoline)
- Art
  - Hang paintings by community
- Wood materials – not "industrial feeling"
- Welcoming and beautiful artwork

Staffing
- Staff should be multi-racial
- Staff who are compassionate, empathetic, and patient
- Spanish/Somali speaking staff
- Knowledgeable people
- People who are like the people we serve (diverse ethnicities, disabilities, languages)

- More human interaction, less email

What is important when selecting location?
- Near bus stop
- Bus line or transportation service to bring them
- Transportation hub
- Easy accessible by car, by walking, by public transportation
- ADA accessible
- Easy to navigate to
- Easy to access for all demographics
- Central location
- In a central neighborhood
- Within the community
- Close to town
- Southeast – Specifically Marion Road
- Northwest – Because of lots of community resources close by – grocery stores, law enforcement centers, banks, and other businesses
- Anywhere but provide transportation
- Busy/populated area (Not on busy street)
- Handicap accessible
- Free parking/parking lot
- Not by other Government Ass. buildings
- Further away with more space
- If space is shared, make sure people know where to go
- Appeasing, pleasant
- Professional
- Not in another organization (church, county, school etc.)
- Privacy option – some may not be comfy in public space
- No one else is using the space
- Multiple location – smaller hubs
- "Security" (not cop) presence for safety
- Playground
- Downtown Rochester (in the middle)
- Walking distance from Mayo Clinic
- Mobile | multiple with focus for each | truck-mobile – come to them
- "Drive thru"
  - Warehouse
- Overhang (raining) or covered
- Collaborate with FSR as location

- Old YMCA

Motivation to come/participate
- Free coffee and food
    - A café/lounge (coffee)
    - Meals provided
- Food
- Safe environment to talk about anything
    - Safe place
    - Safe and confidential
- Friendly and welcoming environment
- Diversity of staff
- Childcare
- Safe environment
- Staff with disabilities (visible/nonvisible)
- Welcoming
    - Warm and inviting
    - Friendly people
    - Women staff for women, men staff for men
- Easily accessible
- Prizes/gifts
- First time gas cards
- Welcome wagon
    - Supportive environment
- Meet others with similar problems
- Resourceful
    - Resources available (food, gas cards, clothes, etc.)
- Actually helpful. Not the run around
    - Information about resources in town/county
- Free or low cost
    - Low or no cost
- More human interactions
    - Open to all families in the community
    - Genuinely caring and helpful staff
- Able to bring a trusted friend/family
- One stop shop would motivate
- Medical opportunities
- Specific topic or theme of the month
- Sports (soccer was highlighted)
    - Social gatherings

- o   Events for kids/activities
- o   Engaging activities for kids and families
- o   On going fun activities for kids
- Helpful from the start – parking lot, help with kids, greeters
- Events specifically in Spanish/French/Somali
- Helpful classes for kids and adults
- Outdoor/outside activities

Barriers to come/Participate

Time

- Time frames that wouldn't work for working parents
- Open at inconvenient time
- No access in times of emergency
- Hours of operation
- Location

Communication

- Language barrier/interpreter
  - o   Discrimination
- Lack of communication
- Cost
- Not wanting parents' input
- Government or church affiliation

Services

- Inconsistency in service
- Lack of activities
- Untrustworthy people
  - o   Nothing, it's usually the people
- Judgmental people/feeling judged
- Prejudice
- Non-judgmental space
- Staff having a history of not being helpful/understanding
- Lack of Discretion
- No childcare
- Not easily accessible
  - o   Wheelchair access
- Lack of free transportation
  - o   Lack of transportation/not having a car
- No parking lot

- Daycare not licensed/qualified
  - Very active/ aggressive children

Misc. Information
- People need to know about it and be reminded. Bill boards, radio media outlets, etc.
- Get information out in the community
- Name of the center – wholesome place
- Community collaboration
- No lines
- Care coordinators
- Working time conflicting jobs
- Late evening hours often
- Open evening hours maybe split shift
- Appointment/walk-ins