



Prosper Springfield – Do You Know About the Springfield Dream Center?

Twelve months after opening, the Springfield Dream Center is celebrating the power of partnerships. Located in Zone 1, the Dream Center's offers "Help for Today and Hope for Tomorrow" by partnering with families to provide resources they want within easy reach of their homes. Jody Glazner, director of the Dream Center, says, "Families don't come to us so we can solve their problems. They come here because they know this is a safe place where we will care for them and listen to them as they work through their own challenges. Just as the Center partners with families to create pathways to progress, the Center partners with groups, churches, individuals, and businesses. "We are grateful to other groups who were already doing awesome things that were effective." Jody states, "We haven't needed to do things in a new way when we can adopt what is already available."

The first partnership began when Hamlin Baptist Church gave the building to North Point Church to use as a Dream Center. Then, staff members spent six months learning what the families wanted, what had already been done, and who was succeeding in other neighborhoods. During this time, the first phase of renovating the building was accelerated by a donation from the Betty and Bobby Allison Foundation to create recreational space for children and teens. After the Center opened, OTC began offering GED courses on-site, and the *Circles* course used by the Northwest Project is also available now at the Dream Center. Volunteers staff the after-school programs that offer tutoring, counseling, and recreational fun for children and teens.

The Center serves as a satellite location for Crosslines, which enables neighbors to walk to the food pantry at the Center rather than travel by bus to a more distant location. The Center's clothing closet provides business attire for job interviews or casual clothing for school. Perhaps the most significant partnership is with the families surrounding the Center. At monthly *Adopt a Block* events, Center staff and volunteers knock on doors asking people in the community, "What do you need?" "How can we help?" and they invite the families to quarterly block parties filled with children's activities, lunch, and community resources. "We accomplished more in our first year than I thought we would," Jody says, "but in the next five years we see so much more that we can do alongside the families in this neighborhood. We're thankful to do what we do with the families we serve and the partners we have."

Prosper Springfield is a collective impact initiative focused on a shared community vision to improve economic mobility in the Springfield community. The column will run every other Thursday. Today's column was co-written by Sharon Ellard, a Give Five volunteer, and Prosper Springfield Director, Francine Pratt. For more information about Prosper Springfield, contact Francine Pratt at 417-888-2020. Prosper Springfield - Uniting Resources. Improving Lives.