

## **Charleston Promise Neighborhood**

### **Panelists:**

Nonprofit: Sherrie Snipes-Williams, CEO, Charleston Promise Neighborhood

Business: Anita Zucker, CEO, The InterTech Group

#### **1. What, as succinctly as possible, is Charleston Promise Neighborhood working to accomplish?**

The ultimate vision of Charleston Promise Neighborhood (CPN) is to transform an under-resourced area (appx. 5.6 square mile area with over 22,000 residents) of Charleston's "Neck" region into a prosperous community with many college-educated adults who are committed to transforming the dynamic of their Neighborhood for generations to come.

#### **2. Why – what are the particular challenges Charleston Promise Neighborhood is addressing?**

Over the course of a generation, CPN will engage residents and provide leadership, resources and programming for an impoverished, yet resilient, community that is marked by under-education, poverty, high unemployment and crime.

#### **3. What are the essential, major elements of the Charleston Promise Neighborhood enterprise, e.g., major education, healthcare (including mental health, housing, employment)**

Over the course of a generation, CPN will engage residents and provide leadership, resources and programming for an impoverished, yet resilient, community that is marked by under-education, poverty, high unemployment and crime. CPN is modeled after the highly successful and nationally recognized Harlem Children's Zone. Through collaborative, multi-year funding support by Charleston's governments, school district, and philanthropic investors, CPN has formed a comprehensive public/private partnership. CPN centers its work around strengthening Neighborhood public schools, preparing educators, and ensuring children are healthy, ready and able to learn. This strategic design centers around Six Strands of Focus—Education, Healthcare, Parent Engagement, Community Engagement, Housing and Employment. CPN's current work is focused on education, healthcare, parent engagement, and community engagement.

Within each strand of focus, CPN partners extensively with businesses, volunteer experts, school district staff, educators, instructional coaches, nonprofit partners, hospitals, neighborhood associations, and residents, in order to make this a true community effort. CPN operates under the premise that we will transform the Neighborhood with the community, not for the community.

To date, CPN has drastically improved the infrastructure within four Neighborhood schools, providing personalized and targeted resources for educators. In addition, CPN has established four school-based pediatric clinics. CPN's Community Engagement Council (CEC) represents Neighborhood Association presidents, residents, and reverends, who engage community residents in CPN's work. The CEC president and vice president serve on CPN's Board of Directors.

#### **4. What areas/communities does Charleston Promise Neighborhood serve? Characterize the community.**

Our community occupies much of “the Neck,” a 5.6 square mile region that straddles portions of the cities of Charleston and North Charleston, and includes 22,000 residents, of which 4,300 are children under the age of 18. CPN directly serves 1,700 elementary and a portion of middle school-aged children at Chicora Elementary, James Simons Elementary, Mary Ford Elementary and Sanders-Clyde Elementary/Middle.

**5. When did Charleston Promise Neighborhood begin work:**

May of 2010

**6. Who is involved – partners?**

- **Governmental Partners:** Charleston County, Charleston County School District (CCSD), City of North Charleston, City of Charleston
- **Educational Institution Partners:** CCSD, College of Charleston, Medical University of South Carolina
- **Nonprofit Partners:** Communities In Schools, Reading Partners, Dorchester-Charleston Mental Health, Lowcountry Food Bank, Trident United Way, American Lung Association, AmeriCorps
- **Expert Volunteers:** Nurses, Doctors, Neighborhood Association Presidents, Residents, Retired Executives

**7. What has Charleston Promise Neighborhood accomplished to date? What successes are they seeing?**

- a. Since CPN began its first school-based program in 2010/11, we have seen the following trends based on the S.C. Department of Education School Report Cards:  
2009-10: (0) Average, (4) Below Average, (2) At-risk  
2010-11: (1) Average, (2) Below Average, (2) At-risk  
2011-12: (3) Average, (1) Below Average, (1) At-risk  
2012-13: (3) Average, (2) Below Average, (0) At-risk  
*\*Note: Sanders-Clyde is has both a middle and elementary school, therefore is counted as two schools for reporting purposes*
- b. CPN has established four school-based health clinics in partnership with the Medical University of South Carolina. Our school-based health clinics help remove barriers to care for students and families in our high-poverty schools and are being considered as a model for school-based health clinics by the SC Department of Health & Human Services.
- c. Because of a strong partnership with CCSD, we were able to create a School Board-approved learning community comprised of our four schools, whose leadership directly reports to the Superintendent allowing for greater operational flexibility, innovation, and an increased focus on student-specific data analysis.
- d. CPN’s Community Engagement Council began with a small group of interested neighborhood leaders, and has grown into a vibrant corps of mobilizers of residents and a recognizable force for community education and transformation.