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**A naturalistic responsive evaluation of a selected middle school
home-school-community partnership**

Legrano, Patricia Evans, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1994

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A NATURALISTIC RESPONSIVE EVALUATION OF A SELECTED MIDDLE
SCHOOL HOME-SCHOOL-COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP

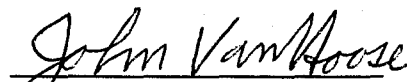
by

Patricia Evans Legrand

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
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Approved by



Dr. John Van Hoose
Dissertation Advisor

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The purpose of this study was to provide a profile of successful efforts to involve parents and community more fully in ensuring the success of children in an impoverished neighborhood. This responsive evaluation focused on a selected program, Expanding Horizons, a home-school-community program, offered by Guilford Middle School and the Greensboro Education Development Council. The program attempted to secure extensive involvement of poor minority parents and the community in the academic life of children. Those strategies concerned with changing attitudes and behaviors associated with the reengaging of the family and the community in the education of young people were the focus of this study.

This study was designed to examine the extent to which the strategies of the program: a) created home-school-community linkages and promoted more involvement in the academic life of children; b) facilitated changes in behavioral and attitudinal outcomes of students, parents/caretakers, and community members. The Naturalistic Responsive Evaluation paradigm was selected as a means of delving into this immensely human endeavor.

Selected school and program staff, seven students and their parents, and key community respondents were

interviewed. The analysis of the interview data of these key informants, and school and program records and documents, provided the basis upon which the study was evaluated. The data from these sources was analyzed qualitatively and revealed positive changes in attitudes and behaviors of parents, community members and students. The academic grades of the students further verified a positive correlation between student academic success as a result of increased parental and community involvement.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Advisor:

John VanHoose

Committee Members:

David Strahan

Cole Ros Baber

Willie L. Baber

September 9, 1994

Date of Acceptance by Committee

September 9, 1994

Date of Final Oral Examination

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I wish to thank my family who insisted on my ability to complete the dissertation. It was from your encouragement that I most often derived strength. To my precious daughters Adrienne and Shannon and husband Jackie Edward, you survived these five years with few complaints. You served as my inspiration and motivation. To my mother, who

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of positive family dynamics has long been deemed a vital ingredient in academic success of students (Epstein & Henderson, 1987). While the failure of schools has been cited as a reason for students' poor achievement, the diminishing involvement of parents in the education of their children has been listed as a major cause for low achievement (Whitmore, 1989). Extensive research on the impact of parental involvement supports this contention.

The education of young adolescents has received much attention in the last 15 years. The document, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (National Commission in Excellence Education, 1983) expressed concerns regarding the middle level student. This study rendered two primary recommendations for school improvement. First, increasing the active engagement of parents in the education of their children and secondly, intensifying community participation to promote educational excellence for American children.

Schools are now reflecting the economic, social, and political woes of our nation. Our society no longer boasts of the typical family. Constant disruptions in families

occur, and new patterns of life are constantly thrust upon the children (Lipham, 1983). Changes in family structure may be linked to declining achievement scores, and increasing behavioral problems have caused educators to actively seek assistance from parents. During the last 20 years, some laws which were enacted do reflect parental involvement as not only a right but a responsibility (Becher, 1984).

The PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) supports parental involvement and seeks to develop on-going communication between educators and the general public. This organization proposes that united efforts will secure for all students the highest advantages and opportunities of quality public education. It has the following objectives:

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in the home, school, community, and place of worship;
2. To raise the standards of home life;
3. To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth;
4. To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth;
5. To develop between educators and the general public such unified efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental,

social, and spiritual education (National PTA Council, August, 1988, Reprinted August, 1991).

In addition to these objectives, the need to involve parents in decision making regarding school policies and educational goals is imperative. Cooperation among other organizations and agencies is likewise needed in the support of the accomplishment of these goals. Interestingly enough, some schools often resort to gimmicks and prizes just to get parents in attendance at PTA meetings and other school functions. Securing and maintaining on-going parental involvement and community commitment is a difficult process especially at the middle school level.

While parent participation at school functions is important, their day to day engagement in the education of their children is most important. Changes in the family structure have much to do with the apparent waning of parent participation. Indeed, research findings substantiate a decline of parental involvement as early as the middle grades.

Despite clearly documented benefits of parental involvement for students' achievement and attitudes toward school, parental involvement declines progressively during the elementary school years. By middle grade school, the home-school connection is virtually abandoned. Many parents believe they should increasingly disengage from their young adolescents. Yet, while young people need greater autonomy, they neither need nor desire a complete break with their parents and families. (Turning Points, 1990, p. 22)

The Carnegie Council identifies that both students and schools may bear some of the blame related to declining parental involvement. While students may resent parent invasion into their private school domain, it is a most critical time for parental involvement. Adolescence is a time fraught with uncertainty for young people, and the need for guidance is crucial. The home-school alliance is a safeguard and safety net for youngsters that may better ensure their success. Schools shared some blame as some parents frequently feel discouraged by the school to become actively involved at the school setting, especially in low-income and minority school districts. Too often teachers may view poor parents as part of the problem and fail to enlist them as effective educational resources.

The statement, "The whole village educates the child", is an old African adage which describes the value of the involvement of a myriad of community persons, other than the home and school, as human resources in the child's learning process. Indeed the community can be an advocate for enriched educational programs of children. Cooperation, communication, and commitment from the school, home, and community is a vital network that should ensure the highest advantages for young people to succeed academically. Positive outcomes may ensue at the elementary, middle, and high school level when the community members express the

value of schooling. "Expanding Horizons" is representative of such a program.

Conceptual Base for the Study

There are two major aspects of a home-school-community partnership that need to be carefully examined: the value of parental involvement and the contributions of community resources that may impact on the academic success of poor children. Several studies assert that parent involvement impacts positively on the overall performance of students, the research in this area is limited. In fact, research on the role of the community deserves wider attention. Research regarding the dynamics of parental and community involvement has received even less attention.

Parental Involvement in Schools

Nothing is more important to success in schools than the quality of relationships between and among students, teachers, and parents. Adult involvement with children will either help or thwart children's development, whether we like it, intend it, or not. (Comer, 1988, p. 35)

Parents either promote or deride the importance of school to their children. Potential conflicts may result when students perceive differences in attitudes concerning the importance of school and education between home and school. Dispelling this disparity is necessary; and re-establishing the parent, teacher, student alliance is

crucial for student success. Klausmeir (1983) proposes that secondary schooling can be improved by increasing school-community partnerships to deal with instruction, curriculum, student conduct, and school governance. A longitudinal study by Klausmeir and Allen (1978) made the following assertion:

For grade 12 students, a positive relationship exists between the rate of cognitive development and the number of variables related to home life and the family, including the perceptions of the parents regarding their children and the school.
(p. 198)

Students were classified as rapid or slow developers in the above study. Those regarded as having rapid cognitive development "hold positive attitudes toward parents, family, school and education" (p. 129). This was a direct consequence of concerned parents who were actively involved with their child's school, teachers, and curriculum. If this is the case at the secondary level, it may also be true for middle level schools.

Oinonen (1980) discovered a relationship between effective home-school programs and student performance. Sestak and Frerich (1968) and Hunter (1967) reported a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. Brookover, Erickson, and Joyner (1967) in a study of junior high school students, found that students demonstrated significant progress in mathematics, reading, and language arts when their parents

were actively engaged in school activities. Baker (1977) views parental involvement in the educational process as enhancing the child's prospects for academic success. These findings yield strong evidence that schools should increase their efforts in securing and developing on-going parental participation.

When parental and school expectations are the same students make an easy transition from home to school; while for others the transition is fraught with many difficulties. For these students school-initiated intervention strategies are needed. Effective strategies must be targeted to not only the children but their family and their community as well. The importance of the family in the academic preparation of the children has been long documented. High on the agenda of many schools presently is an effort to reach those parents who typically are inactive in school-related activities. Schools and parents cooperatively addressing the needs of adolescents, can do much to enhance the academic success of students. Securing the commitment of the community is likewise needed especially among the poor.

Effective communication among parents, teachers, advisors, and students impacts positively on the success of students. Parents engaged in the education of their child provide relevant examples that relay not only the importance of school and education but reflects parental interests in

their child's active learning. Thus, educational programs uniting parents, teachers, and administrators in student affairs are receiving much attention.

The work of Comer (1987) is particularly significant as it concerns meeting the needs of Black inner city youth. This Yale University psychiatrist, who stressed the teaching of the whole child, utilized this premise in schools in New Haven, Connecticut. The poor and primarily Black youngsters profited from increased parental involvement. Moreover, Comer stressed the importance of the school's involvement in meeting the students' psychological and social needs. His work supports the premise that children who feel better about themselves learn more. This program, the "Comer process," has the following goals:

1. Involve parents in the school life of their children;
2. Engage school administrators, teachers, and community members to share authority in school management;
3. Organize counselors, mental health professionals, parents, and teachers into a team to combat behavior problems (1987).

These goals were addressed in the "Comer process" by encouraging parents to become classroom assistants, tutors or aides, and by joining the governance board of the school which met bi-weekly. He has chronicled the success of this

program and its results which included higher attendance, fewer behavior problems, and improved academic performance. The New Haven School study has been adopted by other school systems. This project has received a \$15 million, five-year commitment from the Rockefeller Foundation to replicate the results of the intertwining of the home, school, and social services in addressing the needs of the whole child in preparation for academic success. Parents became school advocates through this program.

Henderson (1987) makes the following statement concerning a 1976 study done by Armor, Gilliam, and Wellisch:

Taken together, what is most impressive about the research is that it points in the same direction. So long as parents are the vital ingredients of the improvement strategy, students will do better in school. But parents must be intimately involved; public relations campaigns; one way communication devices, or dog-and-pony shows are not effective. (Henderson, 1987, p. 6)

The importance of the home as a learning center cannot be refuted. "You cannot educate a child in a vacuum. The home is the child's first school and the parent the child's first and most influential teacher" (Williams, 1989, p. 17). Williams suggests that parents may become "anguished with the schools for a variety of reasons and this is manifested by waning involvement." This "anguish" may result from the negative experiences of parents during their own schooling. "Parents who were not successful in

school themselves pass this attitude along to their children" (p. 17).

An inherent desire of parents is providing for their children. Therefore, another source of anguish may result - from the inability of parents to provide their child with academic help. The program called LEAD was established in an inner city school in Washington, D.C., and actively recruited parents and prepared them to be tutors. A small stipend was paid to them when they tutored during school. Parents were urged to cast votes for board members showing vital concern for the schools, and they lobbied for support and funding. Each activity empowered these parents. They became co-decision makers with teachers and administrators. "When we value parents we mean to involve them in everything--even faculty meetings and social events. No doors are closed" (Williams, 1989, p. 17).

When parents are prepared to help their child, a vital network is established; parents, students, and teachers in collaboration and cooperation. Without such support, school failure becomes more imminent.

Effective parent involvement programs acknowledge the fact that parents are the child's earliest and most influential teachers. Trying to educate the young without the help and support from the home is akin to trying to rake leaves in a high wind. (Gough, 1991 p. 339)

Educators have come to recognize that parent involvement is essential to school success. Schools are

beginning to take the initiative. Gough (1991) further states:

Demographic and other changes in the society have made the connection between school and the home more fragile. Sixty percent of today's students live in families in which the lone parent or both parents work outside the home. An increasing proportion of parents do not share the same cultural background as the teachers who deal daily with their youngsters, and, in this era of deep seated dissatisfaction with the schools, the move from local to state control of education has weakened the home/school relationship even more. (p. 339)

Gordon (1978) presents a home-school model in which parents play six critical roles: volunteers, paid employees, teachers at home, school decision makers, audience, and adult learners. Each role was represented as spokes on a wheel having the effect of not only influencing parent behavior but also that of the children, community, and the school in which each interacts. This model emphasizes that parents must play each role to some degree.

Most essential to school success is the cooperation among the home, school, and the community. Saterlie (1989) relates the importance of parents serving on the advisory boards which make school-related decisions. Comer (1988) reiterates the role of parenting to the success of students; and the quality of the relationship among parents, students, and teachers is especially important when students are under stress and possibly at risk. Self-development, a primary

goal of schooling, is best achieved when the needs of the whole child are addressed.

Community Involvement

In low-socioeconomic communities the most common characteristic they share is that of poverty. The very term denotes lack of power, ownership, and personal empowerment. From the standpoint of some educators the term denotes low achievement, low motivation and low incentive, and poor behavior on the part of the students. Numerous conditions contribute to families living at or near the poverty level and the subsequent crisis situations for many young people. The high incidence of divorce created many female-headed families and plunged them and their children into conditions of poverty. Stern (1987) states an additional contributing factor:

While increased numbers of female-headed families is a product of complex social and cultural changes, the reason for their increased poverty is quite simple: government neglect. (p. 83)

Stern (1987) views the school as an agent of change and that educators may address the issue of increasing poverty by recruiting families and additionally, the community to provide support for poor students.

Educators know that poverty is connected to a host of school problems--such as dropouts, truancy, and low motivation. They also know without changes . . . little

headway can be made in mitigating poverty's disastrous impact. (p. 87)

These crisis situations need to be addressed by the school. The literature supports that the involvement of parents may contribute to averting the tide of despondency and poor achievement of low-income youth.

The role of the community has long been underrated. It is the community in which families socially interact outside of the school setting; and therefore, "the neighborhood usually bounds the meaningful social world of the school child, locating playmates and friends and is the social world within which the school children live" (Litwak & Meyer, 1974, p. 2). If schools establish meaningful working relationships with communities, it can lead to:

the enhancement of conditions leading to maximum learning in the sense of both academic achievement and of socialization contributing to successful life experiences. The direction of the school's professional effort is to increase each child's educational motivation and achievement and to help him develop qualities of good citizenship. The objective of a school-community program is, therefore, to contribute to these purposes. (Litwik & Meyer, 1974, p. 3)

School initiated programs designed to meet the needs of students and families in poor communities must be organized around the needs of that community, and provide networking to resources with the larger community. "The better planned, more comprehensive, and longer lasting the parent

involvement, the more effective the schools become as institutions serving the community" (Armor & Gordon, 1978).

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) in a study of middle schools made the following suggestion: "A community that sets out to educate all its young adolescents to become competent, responsible and productive adults must marshall its resources behind the schools" (p.124). The improvement of schools requires a public in harmony with the schools' effort. Community assistance in the schools and likewise the assistance of the school in the community affords sharing the responsibility of educating children.

McPherson and Nebgen (1991) assert that organized efforts for "long-term school-community partnerships hold the promise of achieving what everyone wants--better schools" (p.326). The community of adults must begin to value their young people and envision them as future leaders and as "manpower and mindpower vital to meet the critical needs to help and regenerate the community" (p.326).

Great disparity may exist between the school and low-socioeconomic communities these schools serve. Louis and Miles (1990) states "There is clear juxtaposition of schools (which aim for stability, concentration, and a belief that hard work can pay off in student success) and that of the community (which has a volatile and changing population, believing education to be largely irrelevant to the press of

safety and survival)" (p.172). Many students attempt to eke out an existence in these turbulent settings and may often view the school as uncaring and quite detached from their way of life. School-community partnerships represent the most effective means of reclaiming such youth.

There is documentation of the effectiveness of such home-school-community liaisons with parents at the elementary and secondary level. However, very little research has been done at the middle school level. Some programs have been developed to involve parents extensively in the lives of their children. They vary in focus; some draw them into the schools while others attempt to teach parent involvement strategies in situations away from the school setting. Very few programs work with both parents and the community with dramatic results. This gap deserves careful attention.

One program, "Expanding Horizons," a joint effort between Guilford Middle School and the Greensboro Education and Development Council, has the goal of involving parents and community in all the dynamics which affect the lives of young adolescents who are part of the "culture of the poor." These reluctant parents need recruiting, and this outreach program seeks to connect with parents and the community in low socioeconomic areas. This school/parent/community endeavor was the focus of this study.

Overview of Program

"Expanding Horizons" is a school-home-community effort that began in September 1990 between Guilford Middle School and the Westview Valley community. Westview Valley is a low socioeconomic apartment complex where many Guilford Middle students reside. The program seeks to: (a) improve student academics and behavior and (b) develop the continual involvement and commitment of students, parents, and community by expanding cultural awareness as well as improving academic and social skills. "Expanding Horizons" utilized many community resource persons including tutors from local colleges and the community, the involvement of business men and women, and by sponsoring field trips and speakers. In addition, speakers, educational resources, and funding were provided by many community agencies including the Greensboro Educational Development Council, Black Child Development, Guilford College branch library, Guilford College Civitans, and area colleges and universities.

The major goals of this program are breaking the cycle of cross-generational poverty and negative expectations of both students, parents, and community by encouraging the involvement of these parents who typically are under-represented in school events. Knowledge of the culture of the poor helps one to understand why poor students may fail to see the benefits of an education which offers long-term results. The very nature of poverty causes families to

concentrate on providing for their immediate needs. The difficult life and circumstances have done much to erode the self-esteem of youngsters born into poverty and sadly schools must share the burden for further eroding the fragile self-esteem that these children bring as they enter school. Mousatakas (1966) asserts:

We all make mistakes. But to commit a wrong, to lower the dignity of a child and not be aware that the dignity has been impaired, is more serious than the child's skipping of words during oral reading. (p. 4)

Schools which are heralded as safe places for children are often the sites where the culture of children is attacked and ridiculed by well meaning teachers who are seemingly indifferent to the culture of ethnic minorities and the poor.

The disparity between cultures from which poor children come and which schools reflect and represent is dramatic. Lowered confidence in their abilities reduces the risk-taking skills and expending their efforts in task completion that more affluent students have developed that leads to higher levels of cognitive development. Sadly, schools like society, blame the victim without regard to the tremendous hurdles these youngsters from impoverished backgrounds have had to negotiate. Utilization of these facts have been considered in the program which was studied. An important

element was to concentrate efforts on rebuilding the self-esteem of students, parents, and community persons.

The Westview Valley community center houses an on-site tutorial program, providing resources and personnel to help youngsters with their school work three days per week. Book drives have provided the center with books, maps, magazines, globes, and additional supplementary materials for student use. The center is open to all community residents to encourage adults to become active learners and to experience academic success.

Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to examine the extent to which the components of the school-home-community outreach program, "Expanding Horizons", (a) created home-school-community linkages and promoted more extensive involvement of parents/caretakers and community members on behalf of the children; (b) facilitate changes in the attitudes and behaviors of students, parents/caretakers and community members. The study focused on the perceptions of these key actors as they endeavored to impact on changing attitudes and behaviors of selected youth residing in Westview Valley. This program was initiated by the staff at Guilford Middle School in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Home-school-community linkages were established and maintained. These linkages were necessary to facilitate meaningful communication between home, school, and community. Assessing the attitudes and values of the home-school-community provided the hidden agendas by which each constituent operated. Home-school linkages, school-community linkages, and home-community linkages were established to effect the cooperation intended to provide the conditions and attitudes conducive to optimal learning environments for young people, especially poor young people. The primary intent of "Expanding Horizons" was to maximize the involvement of parents and community members in the learning experiences of young people of middle school age. In the process of involving these key individuals, changes in both attitude and behavior should be nurtured.

As a result, the focus questions were designed to examine the extent to which the "Expanding Horizons" program promoted changes in student attitudes and behaviors through more intense efforts of parents/caretakers-school-community involvement in the educational experience of young adolescents. With the initiation of the study, the following questions evolved.

Orienting Questions

1. What parental linkages were established as a result of the "Expanding Horizons" program?

2. Was there evidence of increased parent involvement with their children?
3. What community linkages with the school were outcomes of this program?
4. What changes in the community's involvement in the lives of children has occurred?
5. In what activities do parents and community members engage to promote the well-being of children?
6. What changes in attitude and behavior have developed among selected students that are related to the "Expanding Horizons" program based on the perceptions of key actors in the lives of students?
7. What changes in attitudes have developed among parents in this program?
8. What changes in attitudes have developed in community members as a result of this program?
9. What are the outcomes and strengths of the program?

Purpose of the Study

Many middle schools do not encourage, and some actively discourage, parental involvement at school. Especially in low-income and minority neighborhoods, school personnel often consider parents to be part of the problem of educating young adolescents, rather than an important educational resource. (Turning Points, 1990, p. 22)

Few studies have been conducted that provide a profile of successful efforts to involve parents and community more

fully in ensuring the success of children in impoverished neighborhoods. This responsive evaluation focuses on a selected program "Expanding Horizons" that attempts to secure extensive involvement of parents and community. Those strategies concerned with changing attitudes and behaviors associated with the reengaging of the family and the community in the education of young people is the focus of this study.

Significance of Study

Success in school cannot be high on the agenda of children when the family structure is disintegrating and dysfunctional. This is a major problem in many homes across the nation. Financial security is a problem even among white-collar workers, and it is more evident among the nation's less skilled workers. With soaring numbers of unemployed adults, schools are now seeing growing numbers of students who are poorly prepared and fail to buy into the notion that schools offer what is needed to prepare them for the future. Disruptions in families brought on by economic hardship has impacted greatly the academic performance of minority children (Comer, 1989).

A growing body of literature suggests a positive correlation between student academic success and parental involvement, positive parent-school relationships need to be

established (Turnbull, 1983). The primary goal of schooling is to prepare students to contribute meaningfully in society. However, according to most reports, schools are failing.

One important intervention cited by the literature is active and ongoing home-school-community partnerships as a means of increasing the educational performance of students. Justification of the effectiveness of this intervention may be used to supplement the efforts of teachers to provide a meaningful educational experience both at school and home for students (Cone, Delawyer, & Wolfe, 1985). This study attempts to portray the "Expanding Horizons" school-community outreach program and its impact on students, parents, the school, and community members.

Limitations

As this study is qualitative in design, it will not provide data that is generalizable to larger populations of students; but the design can help researchers understand the lives of poor people in a selected setting as they speak for themselves about their attitudes concerning the home-school-community program, and their relationship to it. In addition, three other limitations are: (a) poor urban school students differ in certain respects from poor rural students, (b) the study involves a small sample, and (c) the data evoked from the respondents are self-report data.

Definition of Terms

To yield clarity to this dissertation, the terms below were referenced by the researcher in the following way:

Community - a group of people living in a particular place or region, and usually linked by common interests, or marked by a common characteristic. This assemblage may be based solely on similar economic conditions.

Parental involvement- the activities in which parents engage in their child's educational endeavors.

Parental linkages- the involvement of parents/caretakers in the educational concerns of children by their involvement outside of the home to include school and community activities in order to ensure the well-being of the child.

School-community linkages- all activities in which the school and community engage both during and after regular school hours.

Home-school-community - The school, families, and neighbors in the immediate vicinity of the school interacting.

Socioeconomic status (SES) - A term that correlates to the financial security or lack of security as it relates to the earning potential of persons.

Summary of Chapters I through V

Chapter I:

Chapter I provides an introduction and overview of the study. The need for both parental and community involvement in the educational process of adolescents is attested by the literature. A responsive evaluation of "Expanding Horizons," a home-school-community based program in a low-socio-economic neighborhood, and its effect on averting the educational crisis of the poor are introduced. This chapter also addresses the limitations of the study.

Chapter II:

Chapter II contains the review of the literature which provides the theoretical framework of this study. It addresses the need of parental involvement, the increase of parental involvement in the educational affairs of young adolescents, the means of increasing community involvement, and the role of the school in garnering community and parent involvement to benefit children.

Chapter III:

Chapter III provides the methodology and procedures of the study. It includes the program objectives, the rationale for the naturalistic responsive paradigm, and the data collection procedures.

Chapter IV:

Chapter IV consists of the results of interviews of key respondents to the orienting questions. An analysis of this data is used to determine the effectiveness of the "Expanding Horizons" program on the lives of the children and the community.

Chapter V:

Chapter V represents an analysis of the data. This chapter addresses the conclusions and recommendation of the study.

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Overview

This chapter will review the literature relevant to parental participation and community involvement and indicate their effect on the academic performance of students. It has been suggested through the literature cited previously that schools and parents working cooperatively to address the needs of adolescents can do much to enhance the academic success of students. A review of the literature will (a) add to the body of knowledge concerning the role of parental involvement in the success of students, (b) show how schools may successfully recruit reluctant parents into active school participation, and (c) show how the school/home/community endeavors positively impact on the education of children.

Home-School Research

Values concerning school and learning are instilled in students by parents. The degree to which children thirst for and acquire knowledge is largely determined by the parental attitudes towards school. A summary of Coleman's (1966) research on parental involvement suggests:

1. The family provides the primary educational environment.
2. Involving parents in the child's formal education improves student achievement.
3. Parent involvement is most effective when it is comprehensive, long lasting, and well planned.
4. The benefits are not confined to early childhood or elementary levels; there are strong effects throughout high school.
5. Involving parents in their own children's education is not enough. To ensure the quality of schools as institutions serving the community, parents must be involved at all levels in the school.
6. Children from low-income and minority families have the most to gain when schools involve the parents. Parents need not be well educated to help (Barth, 1976).
7. We cannot look at the school and home in isolation from another; we must see how they interconnect with each other and the world at large (Henderson, 1987, pp. 18-19).

Historical Aspects of Parental Involvement

The biblical admonition "train up a child in the way he should go . . .," (Proverbs 22:6) is dated to 960 B.C. by King Solomon and refers to the role of parents. Parents were to be the child's first teacher, and the home was to be his first school. With the emergence of public education,

and as it became more centralized and bureaucratized, parents were nudged out of the educational process of their children. Parents began to abnegate their role as teachers. Many parents who persisted in such a capacity were strongly discouraged as educators deemed their efforts as counter productive to their own (Gordon, 1972).

Education was chronicled as the great societal equalizer. "Like the uneven distribution of wealth, the uneven consumption of education has long been regarded in liberal circles as blatantly unfair and patently unjust," (Murphy, 1989, p. 11). Fewer and fewer of America's poor buy into the notion that education is narrowing the gap of societal inequality.

The Education Acts of 1980, 1981, and 1988 addressed the rights of parents. More emphasis is now placed on parental rights and responsibilities in the education process. Current research supports the view that parents play a critical role in the education of their children. Federal legislation in the 1960s was designed to focus the attention of parents into active school involvement. In the 1980s stronger legislation was enacted to inform parents of their rights and responsibilities in the education of their children.

Today's educators wrestle unsuccessfully with problems resulting from drugs, poverty, broken homes, and general apathy. The growing problem of schools reflects the state

of society, and children are merely acting out what is mirrored in the larger society. A state crime report notes the high incidence of crime and violence among youth is growing at a phenomenal rate commensurate with the rise of dysfunctional families, little or no parental supervision, and poor educational backgrounds as the major factors.

It's very hard to work with these violent offenders and rehabilitate them without some family support, and in most cases the family support is not there. These offenders generally share the same or similar backgrounds; coming from homes with erratic role models, with unemployed head of the household; poor supervision; and poorly educated parents; of average intelligence, but low academic performance; who generally view drugs as a means of easy money; and fail to show little remorse for what happens to the victims. (Dunn, 1992)

Strahan (1989) refers to such youngsters as "disconnected." These students who may also be "disruptive" feel disconnected from the academic world of the school" (p. 2). Strahan stresses that positive school experiences may be the means to connect the disconnected. The involvement of school, parents, and community in a joint endeavor can provide opportunities, personal support, and success both in and outside the school.

Programs designed to reclaim those youth described in the above passage of necessity must provide successful experiences for these youngsters. The development of self-worth results from the value others demonstrate toward those

persons. One such exemplary program entitled TOPS (Teaching Our Pupils Success) seeks to:

change attitudes and behaviors of students and teachers so that students view themselves and their potential in a positive light. The staff firmly believed that the barriers to academic success were embedded primarily in social and emotional concerns. Once these barriers were eliminated, the student could more fully focus on the academic arena." (Van Hoose, 1991, p. 6)

A strong component of the TOPS program is recognition of the value of parental influence. Community and parent involvement is encouraged to provide support and services; and the program provides regular on-going communication between home and the school. Without the enlistment of parents, schools are poorly prepared to help children cope and learn. There is now renewed interest in increasing parental involvement in the school as current research emphasizes that parent involvement improves children's academic performance.

Importance of Parents in the Schools

"Parent involvement in the educational enterprise is neither a quick fix nor a luxury. It is absolutely fundamental to a healthy system of public education" (Henderson, 1988, p. 48). In 1981 the National Committee for Citizens in Education (NCCE) published an annotated bibliography, The Evidence Grows. The 35 studies all verified that parental involvement in almost any form

produces measurable gains in student academic performance. School improvement efforts are successful when student achievement is raised, and the data suggests involving parents can make a critical difference (Henderson, 1988). The evidence indicates that everyone benefits when parents are involved, especially the children. "The form of parental involvement does not seem to be as important as that it is reasonably well planned, comprehensive, and long lasting" (Gordon, 1972, and Becher, 1984). Parents are, therefore, identified as one of the essential components for the academic success of their children. Parents and the community members have a vested interest in education. Not only do they "own the school, but they have the right to build, alter, or even abolish schools and to shape their policies" (Van Til, 1978, p. 345). Parents, then, have a say in the areas of curriculum, discipline, and school governance.

Parent recruitment is needed especially among minority students. One reason cited by Williams (1989) was the "anguished relationship" that some parents have with the school. Since the need is to have them actively involved in school affairs, it is necessary to deprogram, if possible, these negatives from the minds of parents as their attitudes concerning school is reflected in that of their children.

Lynch and Stein (1982) share three reasons for parent passivity in school participation: (a) logistical problems

(lack of transportation, babysitting); (b) communication problems; and (c) language and cultural differences. Teachers were also identified as a barrier. Devaluing parental input and the cool reception received by many parents from teachers serve as a deterrent to further voluntary school participation. Feelings of inferiority may result from a diminished sense of status or having no power in decision making. A strong sense of "intimidation" is a real concern when the parent is outnumbered by professionals.

Rutherford and Edgar (1979) suggest that greater efforts in meeting the informational needs of parents is a basic ingredient in cooperation and mutual trust between the home and school. Three factors have been identified as having bred the distrust and hostility between parents and teachers. The first factor is the fear of meeting the teacher. The reasons are numerous, ranging from the parents' own negative school experiences, bad experiences with their child's teachers, which often include having to assume the blame for the poor performance of the child (Rutherford & Edgar, 1979). The second is the attack by the media on the ineffectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of its constituents. The third is the teacher-held view that parents are responsible for the problems of their child. Teachers can dispel this idea by soliciting help

from parents to cooperatively address the problems exhibited by the child.

Teachers are the benefactors of these liaisons as they gain greater status, recognition, appreciation, and generally more opportunities to teach effectively and participate more meaningfully in the lives of students through effective teacher-parent partnerships. Teachers are likely to achieve better results because they learn more about the students they teach. "When families and teachers are in active mutual communication, they reinforce and complement one another to enrich each others work" (Osborn, 1959, p. 14).

Parents must come to realize the importance of their role as educators. "Parental influence is considerably more profound than that of the school" (Topping, 1986, p. 1). Effective home-school relationships can be encouraged through active solicitation of parents for school activities, both during school and outside the regular school hours, leisure events, and policy making activities (Topping, 1986).

Increasing Parental Involvement

The importance of home-school interaction and means of establishing these relationships were addressed by Comer in the summary of the Comer process which follows:

First adequate academic learning must be understood as a product of overall child

development and not an isolated mechanical function determined almost entirely by the child's innate ability and will. Second, teachers, administrators, and support staff need to receive preservice and inservice training that gives them the skills to create a home-school relationship climate that promotes development and learning. Finally and most important, all school personnel should be screened and selected for their capacity to work in a collaborative fashion with colleagues, parents, and community as well as for their mastery of academic content and teaching methods. (Comer, 1984, p. 14)

Academic success of students is fostered by effective parenting styles. It is most important to realize the home as the child's first school. Steinberg and Elmen (1986), in the article "Authoritative Parenting Promotes Adolescent School Achievement and Attendance," suggested that the family environment creates the autonomy of adolescents. Higher grades and better attendance were observed in students from homes where an authoritative approach was used. The study revealed that an important determinant of school success can be deemed by the level of responsibility of the student. Authoritative parenting styles were associated with positive outcomes in children. Parents who are authoritative (strong, but open to discussion and negotiation) use democratic practices as opposed to authoritarian or permissive styles of parenting. Authoritative parenting results in higher levels of self-esteem and, consequently, school success. When parents are warm and not overly controlling, the children begin to develop autonomy at an earlier age. Though there is no

recipe for parenting, evidence suggests that authoritative parenting positively correlates to academic achievement (Greenberger & Steinberg, 1986). Though schools fear imposing on matters of parenting, disseminating materials on effective parenting can be provided to those requesting help.

Role of Government Agencies in Parent Involvement

Federal Initiatives

There is the garnering of parental support at the federal level. Federal programs in the 1960s grew out of the "New Frontier" and "Great Society" Programs under the Presidential leadership of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Chapter I and Head Start were specifically targeted to reduce the effects of poverty on parents and children. The importance of the families' involvement is a very clear tenet in the effectiveness of these programs. Head Start has the philosophy that changes in the educational attitudes of parents produce corresponding changes in the lives of their children. FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools), recognizing the importance of home/school partnerships, provides funding for innovative home-school designs and implementations. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement has received funding for a five-year Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning. The center will research

the effects of partnerships among the institutions which affect learning from birth to adolescence. Such investments by the federal government allude to a recognition of the need of collaboration and support of all sectors in meeting the needs of youngsters. Chapter II goes a step further by encouraging parent involvement in the area of helping children with homework. Like Head Start, Chapter I and Chapter II, the Adult Education Act, and Education of the Handicapped Act stress that reaching families is the most effective means of reaching children and improving the education received by them.

The Institute for Responsive Education (IRE) grew out of a five-year, \$6.3 million project funded by the U.S. Department of Education. It was founded by Don Davies, a professor at Boston University School of Education and former Deputy U.S. Commissioner of Education. The funding provided data solicited by a consortium including Boston University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Illinois, Wheelock College, and Yale University. As a result of this concerted effort, the Research & Development Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning was established.

At present 75 schools internationally are part of the League of Schools Reaching Out. The goal is "promoting the social and academic success of all students through family-

community-school collaboration" (Davies, 1991). The league has the following objectives:

1. To provide help and stimulation to schools that are working hard to "reach out" to families and communities by engaging in collaborative projects and studies around home-school-community partnerships;

2. To promote policies and practices based on research on how families, schools and communities can positively influence children's development and learning;

3. To attract the widespread attention to successful efforts by schools to foster academic success of all children by forming new partnerships with families and communities.

State Initiatives

The California Policy on Parent Involvement grew out of the school reform movement of the 1980s. Student success was linked to connections between school curriculum and parent involvement. This program emphasizes the need of involvement of all parents at all grade levels. A special characteristic of this program is the local authority to design and implement policies and programs.

The awarding of grants to programs which connect families to the schools and improve existing ones provides tremendous incentives (Solomon, 1991). The Tennessee Project is lauded as an early leader in creating these connections. In 1986 Tennessee was awarded in excess of \$1

million in grants to both its urban and rural schools for projects designed to boost student performance, attitudes, and behaviors.

Another promising state initiative is the Minnesota Plan involving more than 25 state organizations. Some of the organizations include the State Department of Public Instruction, the University of Minnesota, local colleges, the Chamber of Commerce, state agencies, Head Start, African American Parent Advocates, and the Urban Coalition of Minneapolis. These and other groups conferenced together to develop strategies and desired activities to enhance school/family partnerships. Through joint efforts, state policies and programs were developed to involve all families in educating their children from birth to three years. Another program, "Success is Homemade," seeks to extend that involvement from kindergarten to grade 12.

California, Tennessee, and Minnesota are not alone in program planning and implementation. But despite such programs, the need is still great for more programs.

Most schools and teachers, however, have not taken significant steps toward building partnerships with families. In most schools, some parents are informed about some things some of the times by teachers. Families still feel "lucky" when teachers inform them about and involve them in activities with their children. (Epstein, 1991, p. 348)

Local Initiatives

In Greensboro, North Carolina Mayor Vic Nussbaum proclaimed Sunday October 11, 1992, as "Parent Involvement Sunday." The program had as its motto, "It Takes a Whole Village to Raise a Child." It was held at The Church of God in Christ Cathedral and was sponsored by Greensboro Public Schools' PTA Council, the Family Resource Center, and School Community Relations for Greensboro City Schools. In attendance and bringing greetings were the school board chairmen for both Greensboro City and Guilford County, the Honorable Mayor Vic Nussbaum, Greensboro Public School-Community Coordinator Mable Scott, and a large representation of central office staff and principals. The message was disseminated loudly and clearly that parents are needed to help in the education of children and preparing them for the 21st century. Parent involvement as both a right and a responsibility was oft repeated as they proclaimed "home is where the start is." The issues of crime, drugs, and student and parent apathy were addressed; and an appeal was made to parents to unite in effort and commitment for better education for children, all children, and to bring all resources to bear in educating them. A series of community meetings was sponsored to allow parents and community to express concerns about schools and what they expect in the wake of school merger.

Currently, newspapers and television dispense information addressing the schools' need for active parent involvement. Parent-school partners are needed in capacities which involve planning and establishing school policy because the education of children is no longer considered a private domain of the school.

Changes in the family structure have shifted more of the responsibility for educating the nation's youth onto the schools. However, partnerships between the home and school, will best assure quality education (Whitmore, 1989). Comer (1986) provides insight in the number of roles parents may serve in the schools and addresses how the home-school relationship can be improved to foster increased academic success in children.

Lightfoot (1986) discusses the issue of empowerment and "good schools." It is obvious that in such schools there is time to listen to the voices of parents, students, and teachers; and each is afforded the opportunity to have input related to those issues which affect them. Rutherford and Edgar (1979) offer suggestions for creating a helping rather than adversarial relationship between home and school. Parents working closely with teachers create the conditions which ensure the success of students, as each serves in the capacity of student advocates.

There is much concern about the high rate of poorly performing ethnic minority students. "There is no apparent

lack of intellect which would cause such poor performance on the part of far too many of these students" (Comer and Poussaint, 1975, p. 219). Comer and Poussaint (1975) describe the difficulty of bringing up healthy Black children in America, pointing to a society steeped in prejudice, where young Black children learn very early that a disproportionate amount of prejudice is hurled at them. This has a marked influence on the difficulty of establishing their identity. They are rendered less capable of making the transitions expected of them in school and suffer a greater degree of failure in school. In order to stem this tide, it is essential that schools create programs which will foster effective communication with parents of poorly performing youth. Parents communicate important values concerning school and learning, and their attitudes shape those of their children. When negative attitudes result from their own experiences with school, interventions are necessary to evoke change (Sattes, 1989). Attitudes change when parents become involved in the school. Parents become supportive of the school through their involvement, and their values and attitudes serve to positively shape the child's school performance.

Involvement in almost any form seems to improve student achievement. The greatest degree of achievement occurs, however, with high levels of parental involvement. Parents trained as tutors represent total involvement in the

process of education (Sattes, 1989). However, parents serve as tutors more often in the elementary school years. As the grade level increases, there is less active parent recruitment by the schools. Another factor may be the increasing complexity of content which causes parents to feel less confident, and students become less willing to take instruction from parents. Sattes (1989) suggests other meaningful involvement including simply serving in the role of encouraging learning. Informing parents of grades and behavior generally is sufficient to evoke parental involvement. Henderson remarks on the study done by Mowry (1972).

When parents show an interest in their children's education and hold high expectations for their performance, they are promoting attitudes that are keys to achievement, attitudes that can be formed independently of social class or other internal circumstances. It is at this point that the school enters the picture. Schools can encourage parents to work with their children and provide helpful information and skills thereby reinforcing a positive cycle of development for both parents and students. Studies show clearly that such interventions whether based at home or school, and whether begun before or after the child enters school has significant, long lasting effects. These effects vary directly with the duration and intensity of parent involvement (Henderson, 1987, p. 4).

The special effect of such interventions of parents for their children promotes the development of new skills in the student and the motivation to succeed. In addition their performance is improved due to the confidence they gain in

their new found abilities. Out of the research relating to school-based parent programs directed among low income parents trained to work with their children, improvement has been noted in the areas of language skills, test performance, and behavior with an added benefit of parents developing positive attitudes relating to school and the school staff. Becher (1987) suggests that many parents became involved in garnering additional community support for the schools, and became more active in their own community affairs, and sought more education for themselves.

Becher's research asserts that children with high achievement scores have parents who hold high expectations, respond and interact with the student on a frequent basis. These parents also view themselves as teachers of their children and thereby reinforce what the children learn in school. This evidence suggests that effective home-school programs build strong partnerships equipping parents with the skills to, at least, encourage learning and, at best, prepare them to assist their children as teachers thereby improving school effectiveness and student achievement. A nationwide study conducted by McDill (1969) concluded that the degree of parent and community interest in quality education is "the critical factor" in explaining the impact of the high school environment on achievement and educational aspirations of students.

The effectiveness of the school is dependent upon activities which occur within and outside the school. The research yields the following points:

1. It is difficult to isolate the influence of parent participation on achievement from the effects of social class and race, but parent participation appears to be associated with enhanced achievement of low income students;

2. Parent decision making is not particularly related to achievement and parent-school contacts are only marginally effective.

3. Programs fostering parent involvement in at-home teaching improve achievement particularly for low-income elementary school children, but more elaborate parent programs and parent education are needed;

4. The Effective School's Movement de-emphasized parent participation in the belief that it would weaken the school's responsibility for educating all children; and,

5. The shift from federal to more state responsibility for education, together with renewed interest in parental choice, may have increased the potential for parents to participate in determining the education in their communities (Urban Education, 1985).

The goal of the school is to provide quality education to each of its constituents. Students enter schools with diverse backgrounds and attitudes relating to school and its

importance to their lives. Family background and parental attitudes are two prime factors that determine what students will do about the educational programs presented to them. Schools enroll students from diverse cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. "This country no longer consists of a tapestry of fundamental communities (if indeed it ever did); its fabric is constantly unraveling and reassembling itself" (Henderson, 1987). This means that schools must take the initiative to encompass parents in the learning process and establish continuity between home and school. If home and school exist as disparate groups--suspicious of the intentions of the other--children will find it difficult to integrate the separate experiences.

School-Community Research

If bridges are to be built, who will build them? Schools can take the initiative. School people, including principals, teachers and pupils, neighbors, community leaders, agencies that serve the community, all, in one way or another, whenever contacts are formed, help to build bridges between the school and community for mutual benefit and cooperation. The child is educated by his total environment, hence the school staff must have a thorough knowledge of the character of the community it serves. This knowledge gives the school a basis for formulating programs and establishing community contacts. (Bridges Between the School and the Community, 1949, p. xi)

"Community relations," is a popular buzzword. It is a process of communication between the school and the community so that the citizenry understand the educational

needs and practices of students from the school perspective. Additionally, the school comes to understand the home and community perspective, and thus, establish effective home-school-community relations resulting in a collaborative effort to benefit the children they represent. Important to the educator is knowing what parents and other taxpayers do for children and what they expect schools to do for them.

Schools have not always respected the idea that they belong to the people. School initiated programs are just recently beginning not only to value but to actively recruit parents to assist them in the education of today's youngsters. For many years the public sector was merely tolerated, and public involvement was considered a nuisance by schools. Some systems failed to see or appreciate the responsibility of the school to the communities they served, and rarely was the public invited into working relationships with teachers. The role of the public was to provide students and revenues and then to leave the rest to the schools, school boards, teachers, and the administration. Some school systems presently assume their responsibility to the communities they serve and actively recruit parents into meaningful relationships and responsibilities with the schools and teachers.

Coleman (1966) reports there is much that public schools can do to increase the sense of community among families and enhance the value of the school. Orienting

programs to address the needs of the community has some effect on the schools' effectiveness and students' achievement. Strengthening the bond between parents, the community, and the school allows for common standards to develop for the educational success of the children.

Knowledge of the community in which the students reside is important. Benson (1979) speculates that class, neighborhood, and school environment are strong "counterweights" to individual family influences. High socioeconomic children, even when neglected by parents, tend to have positive support from neighbors, teachers, and other family members. Their own expectations for success in life are higher. Low socioeconomic children, even with strong parental influences, are often surrounded by negative influences in their selection of friends in the community as well as at school. Parents have the greatest impact on the achievement of their child when outside influences are not strongly negative or positive. Benson (1979) concludes that social policy would do better to reduce the poverty environment than to put extra resources into the schools.

Coleman (1966) confirms that low socioeconomic status has a stronger debilitating effect on achievement than anything else. Low socioeconomic children who have high parent input and attend low income schools do better than low socioeconomic children who attend higher income schools but who have lower parent input. In other words, parent

input does reduce the proportion of low achievers, but students do not overcome the disadvantage of low-income. The overall objective of the school-community alliance is improving the quality of education for children and youth attending schools. Schools can involve the reluctant parent by taking the school to the community. The goals of this school-community liaison are as follows:

1. To develop intelligent public understanding of the school in all aspects of its operation.
2. To determine how the public feels about the school and what it wishes the school to accomplish.
3. To secure adequate financial support for a sound educational program.
4. To help citizens feel a more direct responsibility for the quality of education the school provides.
5. To earn good will, respect, and confidence of the public in professional personnel and services of the institution.
6. To bring about the public realization of the need for change and what must be done to facilitate essential progress.
7. To involve citizens in the work of the school and the solving of educational problems.
8. To promote a genuine spirit of cooperation between the school, parents, and community in sharing leadership for the improvement of community life.

Epperson (1991) states that "community participation is a vital and needed component if our children are to attain the academic levels they are capable of reaching"(p. 454). Communities, businesses, and civic groups were actively involved in an endeavor called Operation Rescue. This partnership grew out of a "student achievement crisis" in the Washington, D.C. district schools. Both public and private organizations along with parents and community resources pledged their total commitment to the schools and the youngsters served by them. In the previous year, the district had 10,000 failures. Tutorial programs provided to these at-risk students were manned by 900 community residents and volunteers secured through a four-week recruitment program. Through one-on-one and small group tutorial sessions 7000 at-risk youngsters graduated. This successful partnership of community volunteers and educators renders strong evidence of their positive effects on the lives of young people in the nation's capital. Epperson (1991) is adamant concerning the community's involvement in the lives of children.

Our youth cannot afford to have less than our best effort and total commitment to their education. Though many problems persist in the educational fabric of our society, some of those problems can be effectively addressed by community based organizations and school systems working in partnership" (p.458).

The U.S. Department of Education Publication (1989) places emphasis on effective working relationships between

the school and community. Rather than a tug-of-war relationship, each entity can provide a richness that results from the different experiences each may offer to benefit the child. The community is capable of providing "real life" experiences, and the schools may offer the academic tools to help young people solve their problems by socially acceptable means. Properly nurtured these interactions may be self-sustained. The publication offers these tenets to school-community liaisons:

1. Partnerships with schools provide a wide range of resources including funding, tutors, and community expertise.

2. There is coordination of the activities of community-based service organizations.

3. A pool of volunteers serving as tutors who help to improve the mastery of subject content and skills is provided.

4. Scholarship provisions are made possible through business and foundation partnerships.

5. Recognition of student, volunteer, and program accomplishments occurs through media, newsletters, and awards programs. (U.S. Department of Education, 1989)

Lightfoot (1978) vividly shares with the reader in Worlds Apart the real dilemma students face as they maneuver from their communities to the schools. Schools must take the initiative to engage themselves in the lives of the

children through on-going home-school-community partnerships.

Schools will become comfortable and productive environments for learning when the cultural and historical presence of Black families and communities are infused into the daily interactions and educational processes of children. When children see a piece of themselves and their experience in the adults that teach and feel a sense of constancy between home, school, and community, then they are likely to make a smooth transition from one to the other. (p. 175)

The business of educating the youth of America is an awesome task. Fortunately for educators there are parents; fortunately for parents, there is the community, and fortunately for the home and the community there is the school. When proper relationships exist there is a win-win situation in place for the youth of our society.

Summary

From the studies presented, the following conclusions may be drawn: (a) appropriate parental involvement is related to higher student achievement; (b) the role of the family and home education is an index to the success of student achievement at school, (c) parental involvement at any grade level produces positive benefits; (d) poor and ethnic minority students make educational gains when there is extensive parent involvement; (e) education is a partnership, an endeavor requiring the assistance of the home and the community in affording the greatest opportunity

to students; (f) educators must not view home, school and community as disparate groups but see them as interconnected; and (g) schools must take an active part in community programs as an extension of the school's program.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study was designed to examine the effectiveness of selected strategies employed by "Expanding Horizons" a home-school-community outreach program offered by Guilford Middle School. Guilford Middle is an exemplary school located in Guilford County and has received numerous awards indicative of the level of commitment of the school staff in meeting the needs of its students. Pride in the school is readily evidenced by visitors as noted by the overall appearance of the school along with carefully landscaped areas displaying flowers and massive pumpkin vines bearing their fruit in the central garden. The garden with its fruit and flowering plants radiates a sense of pride, peace, and loveliness. Signs are present which both invite and protect those whom the school serves, suggesting that visitors are welcome, provided they sign in at the office.

Careful attention is likewise placed on the students and their needs. Special emphasis has been placed on the at-risk student. The many awards received by the school are a testimony of the school's hard work. Numerous

intervention strategies have been targeted not only at retaining students but also at promoting extensive school success of this population for whom success has been almost non-existent. Because the home and its influence may negatively override that of the school, a community outreach program was begun to assist students, parents, and the community who are part of the culture of the poor.

"Expanding Horizons" sought to help parents, their children and the community view school as a viable option offering students the skills which are necessary to live successfully in our society.

This dissertation was designed to investigate the effectiveness of selected strategies of Expanding Horizons and the extent to which the activities of this program, (a) created home-school-community linkages and more intense involvement in the lives of children; (b) facilitated changes in behavior and attitude of students, parents/caretakers, and community members affected by these strategies. Careful attention was focused on evidence of improved attitudes and behaviors of students as yielded through school and program records and documents, researcher observations, and oral self-report data from the key actors which included the students, parents/caretakers, school and program personnel, and community members. A brief profile of the setting follows.

Overview of the Setting

Westview valley is a low income housing development of Housing and Urban Development. It provides 100 family units and is located in the Guilford Middle and Guilford Primary School district. "Expanding Horizons" was housed in the recreation center at Westview Valley and programs are offered to meet the needs of the community as well. The school became concerned as some of the community's problems found their way into the school. Guilford Middle School's Assistant Principal, Mr. Bratcher, Media Specialist, Mrs. Murrill, and a core of teachers, established contact with the community and studied ways to address the community concerns. A different type of research approach would be appropriate to address this type of intensely human evolving endeavor that focuses on the subtleties and intricacies of community life. The approach selected is the Naturalistic Responsive Evaluation Perspective.

The Naturalistic Responsive Evaluation Perspective

This study concentrated on the issues and concerns of the subjects involved in the "Expanding Horizons" school-home-community project. Assessing the attitudes of the key actors in this home-school-community endeavor would disclose the hidden agendas on which the home, the school, and the

community operate. The concerns of each entity must be addressed so that each was understood by the other. The intricacies of the home-school linkages, school-community linkages, and home-community linkages must be established to effect the cooperation which is essential to provide the conditions and attitudes conducive to optimal learning environments for young people especially among the poor.

The research methodology most suited to delving into these concerns was the naturalistic responsive methodology. This method of inquiry seeks to describe the ways that people make sense of their lives (Bogdan & Bicklen, 1982) and provides "a snapshot of reality" or "a slice of life" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 370-371). Data is extracted in the natural setting in this methodology and allows the observer to "experience" and come to understand different value systems and attitudes of those involved in the program yielding holistic rather than superficial understanding.

The ultimate goal of this research is understanding what can be accomplished as we give voice to those who know so that we can see as they see. Stake (1975) developed a "responsive" model of evaluation which allows the researcher to learn the interests and concerns through the language of the audience, and the research is guided by these concerns. This mode of inquiry allows the evaluator to learn about the needs of persons for which the study is being conducted and is therefore responsive.

To emphasize evaluation issues that are important for each particular program, I recommend the responsive evaluation approach. It is an approach which trades off some measurement precision in order to increase the usefulness of the findings to persons in and around the program . . . an educational evaluation is responsive if it orients more directly to program activities than to program intents; responds to the audience requirements for information; and presents different value perspectives. (Stake, 1975, p. 14)

Guba and Lincoln (1981) state:

It is our position that responsive evaluation as proposed by Stake and elaborated by others offers the most meaningful and useful approach to performing evaluations. There are, however, certain additions that it is necessary to make to this formulation . . . the organizer for responsive evaluation is the concerns and issues stemming from the several audiences that the evaluation will serve. (p. 33)

Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe the naturalistic responsive methodology as an expansion of Stake's (1975) earlier responsive model. Guba and Lincoln propose the following steps that an evaluator employs in conducting naturalistic responsive model which may be randomly ordered. The evaluator:

1. Talks with clients, audiences, and others connected with the program to gain a sense of their posture with regarding the assessment of the purposes of the evaluation.
2. Places limits on the scope of the program through the utilization of other sources such as the program proposal, documents emanating from the program personnel, and official records.

3. Makes personal observations of what goes on in the name of the program to get a direct sense of its operation.

4. Discovers the purposes of the project both stated and real.

5. Conceptualizes the issues and problems that the evaluation should address.

6. Determines the formulation of the design from the identified issues and problems.

7. Determines the most effective approach for the generation of such data.

8. Collects data based on the method that has been identified.

9. Analyzes and organizes the data into themes and communicates the findings "in natural ways" providing as much direct personal experience as possible. These portrayals may take many forms providing thick descriptions such as case studies, videotapes, artifacts, and other faithful representations.

10. Discerns and utilizes the best available data which addresses the interests and concerns of the different audiences.

11. Makes decisions concerning the format to be used in reporting the data.

12. Assembles the formal reports (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 25-26).

The thick description alluded to is literal description expressed by the audiences in their own language. These descriptions present data in light of the culture, mores, values, attitudes, and motives of the participants. This paradigm is responsive to the concerns and issues of those associated with the program rather than being limited to the concerns of the evaluator.

Compared with the classic models, they tend to be more extensive (not necessarily centered on numerical data), more naturalistic (based on program activity rather than program intent), and more adaptable (not constrained by experimental or preordinate designs). In turn they are likely to be sensitive to the different values of the program participants, to endorse empirical methods which incorporate ethnographic fieldwork, to develop feedback materials which are couched in the natural language of the recipients, and the shift the locale of formal judgment from the evaluator to the participants. (Hamilton, 1977, p. 339)

Guba and Lincoln (1985) state that naturalistic responsive evaluation "offers the most meaningful and useful approach to performing evaluations" (p. 33). They suggest that in addition to Stake's (1975) model, issues and concerns need to be carefully defined as they are the organizers for the research. A concern is "any matter of interest or importance to one or more parties," an issue "is any statement, proposition, or focus that allows for the presentation of different points of view; any proposition about which reasonable persons may disagree; or any point of contention" (pp. 34-35). Thus, the information provided by

the evaluation is based on the concerns and needs extracted from those persons in and around the program.

Naturalistic responsive evaluation is emergent and as such the design can only be generally specified. Each step in the data gathering process guides the framework and design of the study as concerns and issues continuously emerge, along with knowledge and insights of the audience which too are continuously emerging (Stake, 1975).

We stress, with Stake, that the design of responsive evaluation is emergent (or unfolding or cascading). A responsive design cannot be fully specified except in general terms because each step in the process is determined at least in part by what has emerged prior to that point. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 36)

As is necessary in the naturalistic responsive paradigm, knowledge of the stakeholders is pertinent to accurately frame the study. Stakeholders are the individuals who will be directly affected by the results of the evaluation. The audience includes organizations, groups, agencies, and individuals having an interest in the evaluation. An individual may hold dual status being both a stakeholder and a member of the audience.

Naturalistic responsive evaluation can accommodate rich data sources. Naturalistic responsive methodology is a qualitative method. One advantage of qualitative methodology is that it offers multiple realities:

Multiple realities like layers of an onion nest within and complement one another. Each layer provides a different perspective of reality, and none can be considered more "true" than any other. Phenomena do not converge to form a single "truth," but diverge into many forms, multiple truths. Moreover, the layers cannot be described or understood in terms of separate independent dependent variables; rather they are intricately interrelated to form a pattern of "truth." It is therefore, these patterns that must be searched out, less for the sake of prediction and control than for the sake of understanding. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 57)

The evaluator as portrayed by Guba and Lincoln (1985) is a data instrument serving in the capacity of data collection, interpretation, and analysis. As a human being, the evaluator lends responsiveness to the environment and to those with whom s/he interacts. The evaluator responds and gives cues that elicit responses from the subjects. S/he is sensitive to body language, voice pitch, and phrasing. These multiple observations and analyses afford descriptions which portray real "slices of life" and compensates for the shortcomings of the human instrument.

The human being is both interpersonally and environmentally interactive, and he not only responds to cues--foreseen and unforeseen--but he also provides cues to others He is responsive because he must first "sense" the dimensions of the context, then seek to make those dimensions explicit--even if the dimensions are only or largely tacit to the participants themselves. His responsiveness opens him to avenues of observations--and hence to additional data collection that is not possible to a paper-and-pencil test administrator. (p. 130)

Naturalistic evaluation as described by Guba and Lincoln (1981) is highly descriptive.

The role of description in the social sciences provides the basis for the grounded theory, that is, theory grounded in the "real world" of observable phenomena. . . . most educational programs and social action programs in general fall under this rubric of human endeavor, they are hardly amenable to laboratory study. (p. 149)

Descriptive information as can be yielded through interviews provides information relating to the program setting and the conditions under which the evaluation takes place.

The responsive evaluator working within the paradigm must generate 5 kinds of information: descriptive information, information responsive to concerns, information responsive to issues, and information about standards relevant to worth and merit assessments. (p. 339)

The basis for the findings of naturalistic responsive evaluations is derived from these "thick descriptions". Interviewing is then an integral part of this methodology. The evaluator-subject relationship provided data by exchanging information in face-to-face conversations. It is time honored, extensively used, and considered the most effective data collection method in the field of naturalistic evaluation. Dexter (1970) states that "interviewing is the preferred tactic of data collection when it appears that it will get better and more data at less cost than other tactics" (p. 11).

Documents, records, and unobtrusive measures represent additional sources of easily assessable data to the evaluator. Lincoln and Guba (1981) define documents as follows:

Records are any written statement prepared by an individual or agency for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting. Documents are any written (or filmed) material other than a record that was prepared specifically in response to some request from an investigator. (p. 228)

Guba and Lincoln (1981) provide document examples. A partial list includes: letters, memoirs, diaries and journals, case studies, technical reports, evaluation reports, articles and editorials, life histories, and photographs. Utilization of the previous sources which are pertinent to the research endeavor provides data within the context of the study and capable of yielding "grounded theory."

Records attest to an event or transaction and "keep track" of events. Records include student grades, attendance, and teacher and parent questionnaires.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer the following as advantages of the use of documents and records:

First, documents and records are a stable, rich, and rewarding resource. . . tend to persist; that is, while they may be buried in files that are no longer used, they are often available for the asking. They provide a base from which any subsequent inquiries can work and thus lends stability to further inquiry. . . Not only are they, in fact, an "in context" source of

information--that is, they arise from the context and exist in it-but they consist of information about the context . . . They are thus repositories of well-grounded data on the events or situations under investigation. . . lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquirer is working toward. (pp. 232-234)

Unobtrusive measures as defined by Lincoln and Guba (1981) involve the "process of observing, recording, and analyzing human behavior or behavior patterns without the knowledge or awareness of those being observed" (p. 263). Such observations may occur in the absence of those being observed. These measures provide "traces" of behavior or activity. Unobtrusive measures reduce reactivity and therefore reduce the sensitivity of the measurement. Guba and Lincoln (1985) offer "hair style, clothing, eye-pupil size, nervous tics, gestures, and body language" (p. 264) as examples of unobtrusive measures. The use of these measures offers a means of "cross-validation" and triangulation as respondents are capable of masking true feelings and may deliberately deceive the evaluator.

Wolfgang (1977) remarked that "our culture is so word oriented that we tend to forget that there are other important channels of expressive behavior that play an important role in human communication" (p. 147). He is alluding to data derived from the host of nonverbal cues emanating through stance or body language. Careful

observations on the part of the evaluator can extract messages from "body movements" and "mannerisms." "Nonverbal communication is an exchange of information through nonlinguistic signs . . . intentional or unintentional" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, pp. 215-216).

Data Analysis in a Naturalistic Responsive Evaluation Perspective

The analysis of documents is accomplished by content analysis which seeks to extract the "message" from interview transcriptions. Content analysis like naturalistic responsive evaluation is constantly evolving. Berelson (1952) defines content analysis as "a technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 18). Holsti (1969) perhaps offers a clearer definition. "Content analysis is any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristic messages" (p. 14). A particular form of content analysis is "comparative content analysis" derived from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Lincoln and Guba (1985) concur with these definitions as they "satisfy the three criteria of objectivity, systemization, and theoretical framework" (p. 240). Unobtrusive measures, nonverbal cues, field notes, interviewing, records, and documents provides the multiple data sources from which discovery and understanding

will emerge. Triangulation of these data sources renders confirmation through the multiple realities of individuals on the issues being studied in this dissertation.

Assuring Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the value of a particular study in establishing trust in the outcomes. In the naturalistic paradigm the following concerns were addressed; truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Lincoln and Guba (1981) suggest that member checks may be accomplished through frequent informal interviews and directed discussions among program personnel and school and community participants. Lincoln and Guba (1985) view "member checks" as important in that "insights gleaned from one group can be tested with another" (p. 314). Truth value (credibility) equates to internal validity in quantitative research. In naturalistic responsive inquiry there are multiple realities, and prolonged engagement affords the researcher time to not only come to understand but to become part of the culture which concerns him/her and allows time for misconceptions to be tested by crosschecking or corroboration of the data sources.

Triangulation involves the use of multiple data sources providing credible data. "Triangulation is comparing and contrasting information drawn from different sources, and/or

determined by different methodologies" (Guba, 1978a, p. 116).

Webb and others (1966) attest to the value of triangulation in that:

a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurements processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced If a proposition can survive the onslaught of a series of imperfect measures, with all their relevant error, confidence should be placed in it. (p. 3)

Prolonged engagement allows also the building of trust (Eisner, 1979). Applicability is equated to external validity and relates to the fittingness of the study. Important in the naturalistic mode of inquiry is that findings do not have to be generalizable, and for the most part cannot be. As such, patterns may emerge that may be "general" but not replicable. They represent "slices of life" and one slice may not be representative of another. Thick description (Geertz, 1973) renders a working hypothesis that is useful in and is a fit between the context in which the information was gleaned. Consistency relates to the issue of replicability (reliability). Most often naturalistic research is criticized on the grounds that it is not replicable. Generalizability is not an issue in naturalistic research, neither is replicability. What is very important in naturalistic research is that emerging themes or patterns may be "general" and highly useful in affording a better understanding, and yet, not be

replicable. Neutrality in the naturalistic paradigm corresponds to objectivity in scientific methodology. Since "theories" actually emerge from the discourse with the participants no controls are in place.

On balance again we would have to assert that naturalistic methods are no worse than scientific in achieving neutrality and may be at times better. Whatever degree of apparent objectivity may be lost is more than compensated for by the continuously emerging insights that the naturalistic methods produce. (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 127)

Another issue that should receive attention is that of merit and worth. Guba and Lincoln (1981) indicate that merit be equated with "pure science," knowledge for knowledge sake. It may not ever have immediate utility. Worth denotes applicability in a particular situation or setting as is therefore deemed as practical only in that limited situation. Worth must be re-established whereas merit is constant. Since the goal of evaluation is to describe or judge, both merit and worth must be evaluated. Merit is estimated by the degree to which it conforms to accepted standards. Worth is gauged by its impact in a limited setting.

Procedure for the Study

The naturalistic responsive methodology was based on the work of Guba and Lincoln (1981) and was deemed most

appropriate for this study. Responsive evaluation afforded the acquisition of multiple perspectives from school and program personnel, parents, students, and key community residents, and school and program records and documents. Like the analogy of the "layers of the onion" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), the initial open-ended interviews began to reveal particular concerns on which to focus this study. This researcher desired to gain insight into the effectiveness of "Expanding Horizons" in changing the attitudes and behaviors of selected students, parents and community members associated with the home-school-community endeavor.

This study represents a research endeavor that spans the academic year 1992-1993. The exploratory phase of began September 1, 1992 with an informal interview with Mr. Bratcher, Assistant Principal at Guilford Middle School. This contact in turn led to subsequent meetings with Mrs. Lena Murrill, Media Specialist at Guilford Middle School, and Mrs. Chiquita McAllister, Program Administrator for Programs at Greensboro Education and Development Council. The researcher attended the Greensboro Education and Development Council Advisory Meeting on September 30, 1992. The Advisory Council of GEDC coordinates the community service programs which support the range of human service needs in low income housing developments by providing human resources and funding.

The researcher served as observer several days at Westview Valley observing the "Expanding Horizons" program. There the researcher observed the tutorial program and became familiar with the program personnel and the students. The initial contacts and observations along with conversations with the dissertation advisor provided insight into the program, possible parameters, and the rudimentary framework for the study which guided the development of the orienting questions.

Inasmuch as the responsive methodology lends itself to multiple data resources, naturalistic inquiry provides both meaning and understanding through consistency of multiple realities. Taken collectively, the interviews both structured and spontaneous, the field notes, observations, the examination of school and program documents provided rich narrative discourse. Verbatim quotes extracted from audiotape transcriptions preserved the voices of each informant and allowed the participants to tell their own story. The thick description which is a product of this research methodology provided data which was used to ground the emerging themes providing an understanding of the world view of those interviewed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Field notes, school and program records and documents, and taped interviews of school and program personnel, students, their parents, and key community members provided the raw data rubric from which themes were extracted and

were grounded by it. The interviews allowed the researcher to gain glimpses into the perspectives of the respondents. The evaluation of the impact of "Expanding Horizons" on the lives of the children, parents, and the community was discerned through analysis of the multiple data sources.

Selection of Participants

The selection of informants (in responsive evaluations) is a fairly complicated matter. The naturalistic evaluator is rarely interested in drawing some kind of random sample or representative sample of audience members; his concern is to optimize the information return he will receive from his investment of time and energy (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.310).

Formal interviewing of the assistant principal Mr. Larry Bratcher, the media specialist Mrs. Lena Murrill, selected community leaders, students, parents, and teachers of students involved in the school-home-community program began after the naturalistic responsive design was discerned by the researcher to be the most effective means of preserving the voices of the key actors in the study. The interviews addressed changes in behavior as an outcome of this program as attested by students, parents, community members, Guilford Middle School and GEDC program personnel. Extensive interviews were conducted to gain insights into the multiple realities of selected program participants. Mr. Bratcher and Mrs. Murrill, having dedicated many hours to Expanding Horizons' formation and implementation, were

interviewed on several occasions. The community perspective was of vital importance to this study. Mrs. Proctor was interviewed because of her intense efforts in the community while serving as president of the Westview Valley Resident Association. Mrs. Proctor had been involved in the community prior to the implementation of Expanding Horizons. Mrs. Proctor was actively engaged in securing resident feedback relating to the community needs assessment endeavor. Since the design is emergent, additional key informants in the school and community settings were identified and interviewed as the study progressed.

While serving in the capacity of participant observer during tutorial sessions, the researcher was provided with opportunities to observe and conduct informal discussions with students, parents, and program personnel. In addition to the informal and formal interviews, extensive field notes and audiotaping of the interview sessions along with careful transcription and analysis of interviews and field notes offered validity to this qualitative method of data gathering.

The students interviewed represented a cross section of both the elementary and middle school level. The students interviewed were selected based on their regular attendance in the program. Preliminary interviews were scheduled with parents who came by the center to bring or pick up their child(ren). Those parents were instrumental in introducing

the researcher to other parents in the community. This networking created additional parental contacts. A listing of students who were interviewed include the following:

Tonia(Toni) Smith (grade 7)
 Kristin Wade (grade 6)
 Traci Yusef (grade 7)
 Lisa Yusef (grade 3)
 Ginger Smith (grade 3)
 Ann Harris (grade 4)
 Theron Grace (head start)
 Shannon Grace (grade 4)
 Larry Harris (Kindergarten)(brother of Ann Harris)
 Danielle and Shantell Hall (7 yr old twins of Sharon Entzminger grade 2)

The names of the students, parents and community members were changed to protect the anonymity of these respondents unless written permission was secured. The parents interviewed graciously permitted the researcher to come into their homes and audiotape their responses. The parents were:

Mrs. Yusef (mother of Traci and Lisa Yusef)
 Mrs. Alyce Wade (mother of Kristin Wade)
 Mrs. Mable Grace (mother of Theron and Shannon Grace)
 Mrs. Sharon Entzminger (mother of Danielle and Shantell Hall)
 Mrs. Lisa Harris (mother of Ann and Larry Harris)
 Mrs. Elaine Smith (mother of Ginger Smith)
 Mrs. Velma Parker (foster parent of Tonia Smith and grandmother of Adria and Wade Jamison grade 3)

Greensboro Education and Development Council (GEDC) personnel were interviewed including Mrs. Chiquita McAllister, Mr. Harold Cone, and Mrs. Sharon Entzminger who provided tutorial assistance for GEDC.

The Guilford Middle School personnel interviewed were Mr. Larry Bratcher, Mrs. Lena Murrill, and Mrs. Everlina Diggs.

Key members of the Westview Valley Resident Association were also interviewed. Mrs. Sadie Proctor, president, Mrs. Ann Wade, parent and vice-president, and Mrs. Mable Grace, youth Representative.

The orienting questions served as a framework for each of the interviews. On many occasions while traveling from one home to another, spontaneous interviews with other children and their parents occurred. These spontaneous interviews provided additional networking.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Guba and Lincoln (1981) regard the researcher as an important data gathering instrument. Preparing and utilizing the data represents an important concern to the researcher. Relating the collected data to the research questions involved theme extractions from the volumes of narrative data. Guba and Lincoln (1985) stress the ultimate goal of the research endeavor is to yield understanding that is itself supported by the multiple data sources. The use of direct quotes, researcher inferences, field note observations, observed behaviors, and documents represented the sources from which the themes were ultimately extracted. Holsti (1969) defines content analysis as "any technique for

making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages" (p.14). Glaser and Strauss (1967) use the phrase "comparative analysis" to describe this method of content analysis. It offers a means of utilizing the rich data exuding from the experiences of the respondents. These perceptions were melded to render an evaluation of the effectiveness of "Expanding Horizons" in changing the behaviors of students, parents and the community regarding increased levels of parent-community involvement in the lives of selected students. Bias of the qualitative data is reduced by coding and categorizing the interview data. Data were collected relating to the different orienting questions and the categories began to emerge. Once the categories were identified they were continually refined for specificity.

According to Meyers (1981) reliability results when much care is taken in categorizing the qualitative descriptions. This process is referred to as coding. "In coding, the range of answers obtained to a given question from a subsample of respondents is used to establish categories, which are applied (compared) to the answers to other respondents; the categories are revised and refined to permit relatively unambiguous categorization" (Meyers, 1981, p.166). This technique provided the rubric from which theories, themes, or hypotheses emerged and were thus grounded in the data (Glaser and Strauss, (1967). Glaser

and Strauss (1967) summarized the four steps leading to the formulation of theories or themes. First, there is careful analysis and comparing of incidents within each category. Second, integration of the categories and their properties establish the boundaries. Third, the researcher delimits the theory by a well defined coding system saturated by multiple sources of data. Fourth, themes or theories begin to emerge from interrelations of these different categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, pp. 105-113. Using this method of analysis, the narrative data was placed in categories consistent with the orienting questions and the data was continuously compared with data from other sources within the same category. As the boundaries were established, integration and comparison narrowed the categories and resulted in concepts grounded in the multiple data sources.

The researcher carefully scrutinized the verbatim transcriptions of interviews. Portions of the data which originated from parents, students, school and program personnel, and community members were grouped in categories relating to the orienting questions. A comparison of the responses from each source provided verification of the data and the inferences drawn by the researcher. "Member checks" offered a technique for credibility and is deemed by Guba and Lincoln (1985) to be "the most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (p. 314). Member checks established trustworthiness for the study. They occurred

through follow-up interviews, spontaneous interviews, and on-going observations to check perceptions of the researcher and of the participants. Collating the multiple data sources provided the thick description typical of this research paradigm.

Triangulation provided a reality check or a means of checking the facts to ensure the credibility of this evaluation. Guba (1978a) states "once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced" (p. 116). Trustworthiness was of tremendous importance to the researcher. In order to verify the accuracy of this document and preserve the voices of the informants the document was presented to Mr. Bratcher, Mrs. McAllister and Mrs. Proctor for feedback to allow for a perception check of the researcher.

Prolonged engagement ensures an adequate investment of time and allows the researcher to understand the culture and create an atmosphere of trust. During the many visits to the center the "visitor" status was gradually replaced by "member" status. Interviews with Mr. Bratcher began in September 1992. Observations of Expanding Horizons began in October. Actual interviewing of students and parents began in February and ended in July 1993.

Organizational Framework

Sources of data for this study were determined as initial observations and exploratory visits occurred. Initial concerns and issues in the form of orienting questions were developed through pertinent literature and researcher observations. The orienting questions were refined during on-site visits to the program, and during discussions with those involved with Expanding Horizons. Parents, community members, Guilford Middle School and Expanding Horizons program personnel helped to establish the specific parameters of the study and to identify possible data sources (See Figure 1). This exploratory phase conducted in consultation with the dissertation advisor provided the framework upon which the questions evolved. A crosswalk was developed to portray the orienting questions and the sources of data that would address each question (See Table 1).

The data collected on each question from any source varied rather extensively. For example, the bulk of the data on question one was primarily derived from interviews from school and program administrators and staff, teachers and parents. Student interviews were a minor source of data on this question. To convey the varying degree of data yielded from each source on a particular question the following notations will be used in Table One. A (++) sign in the grid will be used to denote a major source, a (+)

will indicate a minor source. If a data source did not apply to a question, the space in the grid will remain blank.

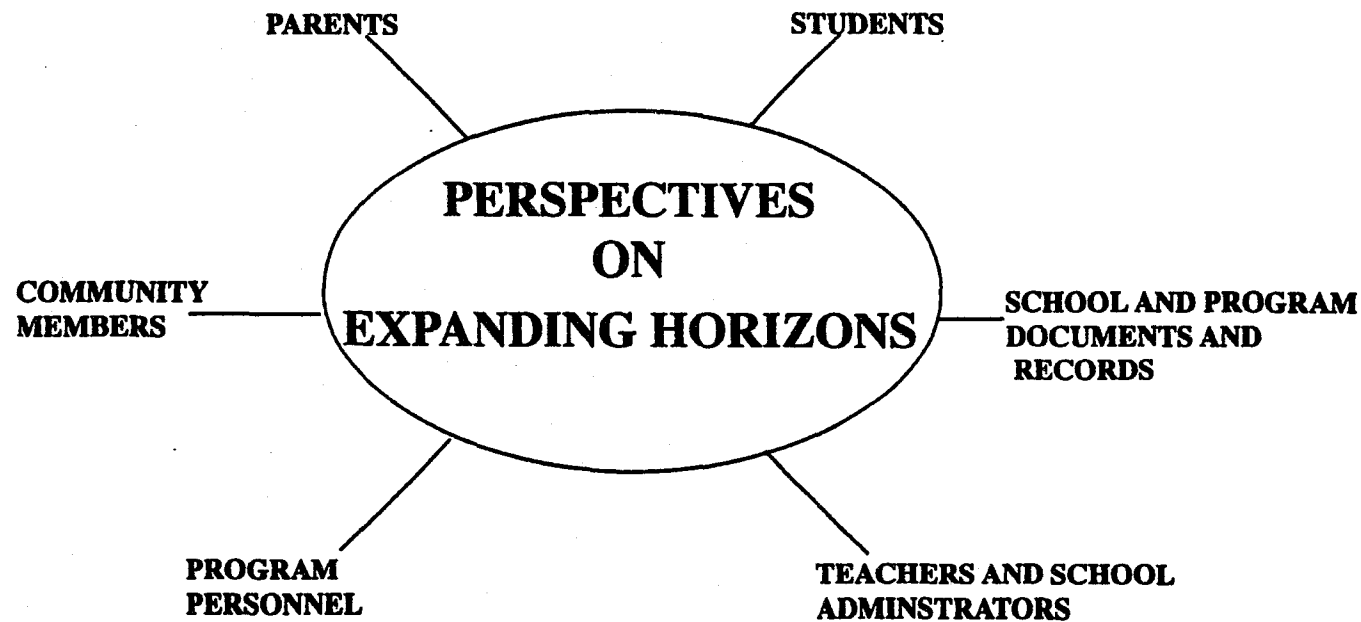


FIGURE 1
DATA SOURCES FOR THE STUDY

To be explicit data were collected from a variety of sources through the use of the orienting questions as outlined in Chapter 1.

Table 1

Orienting Questions	Teacher Interviews	Community Member Interviews	Program Staff Interviews	School Administrators Interviews	Student Interviews	Parent Interviews	Observation Of Program Staff	School And Program Documents
1. What parental linkages were established as a result of the "Expanding Horizons" programs?	+	++	+	++	+	++	+	+
2. Was there evidence of increased parent involvement with their children?	+	++	++	++	++	++	+	+
3. What community linkages with the school were outcomes of this program?	++	+	+	+	+	++	+	+
4. What changes in the community's involvement in the lives of children has occurred?	++	++	+	++		++		
5. What activities do parents and community members engage to promote the well-being of children?		+	++	++	+	++		

Table 1 (CONTINUED)

Orienting Questions	Teacher Interviews	Community Member Interviews	Program Staff Interviews	School Administrators Interviews	Student Interviews	Parent Interviews	Observation Of Program Staff	School And Program Documents
6. What changes in behavior have developed among selected students that are related to the Expanding Horizons community based program?	++	+	++	++	++	++	+	++
7. What changes in attitudes have developed among parents in this program?	++	+	++	++	+	++	+	+
8. What changes in attitudes have developed in community member as a result of this program?	+	++	++	++	+	++	+	++
9. What are the outcomes and strengths of this program?	++	++	++	++	++	++	+	+

Summary

In this chapter, the naturalistic responsive evaluation was described as an effective method of gaining insight into the multiple realities of the program participants involved in the Expanding Horizons program. Chapter IV will provide the findings of the study in a series of data displays organized around each of the orienting questions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Education is a lifelong process. It begins in the cradle and lasts a lifetime. It consists of all those forces and influences which shape one's career and give meaning to one's personality. The higher civilizations organize instruction in an educational system, and in most of them compel their young members to acquire at least the rudiments of education so that they can live intelligently in the social world of which they are citizens. As knowledge and industry grow, it becomes necessary to reorganize the earlier system, and, make it more adequate to meet the new needs. The real test of education is not the number of courses which an individual has had, but the thoroughness with which she/he has worked out an intelligent plan for life. (Wallis and Wallis, 1940, pp. 192-193)

Overview

The purpose of this dissertation was to study the extent to which the parental and community linkages created attitudinal and behavioral changes, specifically the selected students in Expanding Horizons. The program was specifically designed to meet the needs of low income youth in the Westview Valley housing complex. It focused on many of these youth who generally fail to buy into the notion of the value of education in their lives. The reorganization

as mentioned by Wallis and Wallis (1940) and addressed by Guilford Middle School, is in the area of improving home-school-community relationships. This program, Expanding Horizons, is an attempt to help children and their parents overcome the cycle of failure that poverty often breeds. The program is a community based educational setting that provides academic and cultural enrichment to students and community members of Westview Valley.

The home-school-community connection was an important theme in the work of John Dewey in 1899. In School and Society the following excerpt appears:

From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in schools comes from his inability to utilize the experience he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. (Dewey, 1899, p. 44)

This statement by Dewey is probably more true today than in the past. Making the connection between these three distinct and sometimes conflicting entities is the goal and purpose of Expanding Horizons. This study focused on selected strategies employed by this home-school-community outreach program.

Guilford Middle School located in Greensboro, North Carolina, seeks to improve student academic, behavioral, and attitudinal outcomes. Much effort is directed toward changing the attitudes of parents and the community

concerning school. The literature review suggested a positive correlation between student achievement and effective ongoing home-school relations. "Expanding Horizons" goes a step further in garnering community support and involvement. An African adage states that it takes the whole village to educate the child. This program seeks the support of the whole village for the children. It is important that parents, the school, and community share common goals and expectations with respect to the education of youth. The combined impact of home-school-community efforts can have a powerful effect on the lives of children and encourage students to make use of educational opportunities designed to equip them with tools for a successful life.

"Expanding Horizons" grew out of a concern that many Guilford Middle and Guilford Primary students from Westview Valley, a low socioeconomic housing development, were performing less effectively both behaviorally and academically in the school environment than their counterparts. What could be done to address this program served as an impetus in directing attention to this problem. Mr. Bratcher, the Assistant Principal, Mrs. Murrill, the Media Specialist, and a core of teachers at Guilford Middle School began a quest to identify the underlying problems and effect solutions. "Expanding Horizons" as the name implies sought to create greater possibilities for these young

people and the community that had inherited a life of poverty.

This study was selected by the researcher because of its implications for the research community. Great numbers of students in our society are poor, especially urban minority youth, and reside in poor communities. Knowledge of the hidden agendas of the poor students, their parents, and the communities in which they interact must be understood to avert the negative concepts many of these students demonstrate toward school. Successful strategies soliciting parent and community support of young people may have far reaching results in reclaiming poor adolescents from the myriad of problems which they face. A study of one attempt to create effective home-school-community relationships was the focus of this study. The researcher believes this information may yield some workable guidelines for schools to use in creating programs to specifically meet the needs of these deserving youth by extending the school and its services to the community.

The home-school-community linkages of "Expanding Horizons" have been studied from the perspectives of parents, students, school administrators, teachers, program personnel and community respondents. The attitudes and values of the home-school-community individuals was assessed through an interview format.

Program Background

"Expanding Horizons" is a cooperative effort between school, home, and community that began in September 1990. This program grew out of an effort to better serve the educational needs of students at Guilford Middle School. A plan that looked into the efficacy of an effective community outreach program was proposed. The neighborhood specifically targeted was the Westview Valley community where many Guilford Middle School students reside. The program sought to develop and expand cultural, academic, and social interests through increased parent, school, and community involvement and specifically targeted those parents who were underrepresented in school-related affairs of their children.

Guilford Middle School offers various programs to meet the needs of its diverse student population. These programs are consistent with the school's mission statement:

Guilford Middle School's mission is to provide a positive teaching and learning environment including high expectations and encouragement of community involvement leading to a high level of achievement, wellness and self-esteem for all students. (unpublished document)

The coordinating committee of "Expanding Horizons" consisted of the assistant principal Mr. Bratcher, the media specialist Mrs. Murrill, and a core of teachers at Guilford Middle. This committee made the preliminary contacts in the community to determine whether the community perceived a

need for the program. They found an active resident association and worked through it. The resident association selected Mrs. Proctor as its leader and it was this committee that helped to make parental contacts to assess the need for the tutorial program. Parents were contacted by way of house-to-house visitations, and flyers were left where no personal contacts were possible.

"Expanding Horizons" sought to encourage community education through various strategies. They were:

1. To promote academic success and greater interest in school through after-school assistance and specific content tutoring.

2. To provide materials and programs to promote positive decision making through the use of appropriate skill activities and a variety of audio visual media.

3. To provide opportunities for success that would contribute to personal growth, increased self-esteem, and positive self-concept.

4. To establish positive role models in the program through local organizations and colleges.

5. To inform the community of educational, social, and cultural opportunities through workshops.

6. To coordinate information between the school, community, and agencies involved in the outreach program.

7. To increase cultural awareness of community residents by facilitating attendance to outside activities.

8. To sponsor book drives in order to establish an on-site media resource center in the community for tutoring, homework, and self-improvement.

9. To use community resources to foster the development of a safe and orderly environment for the resident families.

10. To build self-esteem through group learning activities. (Guilford Middle School unpublished document)

Chiquita McAllister is the Program Administrator of the Greensboro Education and Development Council (GEDC). This organization provided the personnel for tutoring in "Expanding Horizons." GEDC is a United Way Member Agency dedicated to providing services to underserved communities. Their goal in this program was to improve educational opportunities and provide help in meeting basic human needs for those members of targeted communities. The goals of GEDC were consistent with those of "Expanding Horizons." GEDC not only provided tutorial services and remediation, but also provided recreational and cultural experiences for the youngsters as well as developing leadership skills among members of the adult population.

Exploratory Visitations

Through open-ended interviews Mr. Larry Bratcher, Assistant Principal, and Mrs. Lena Murrill, Media Specialist at Guilford Middle School, the steps in developing and

instituting the "Expanding Horizons" were discussed. They both agreed that communication between the school and the community was the essential first-step for its implementation.

Communication is the key. Parent contacts were made by the Westview Valley Resident Council, Guilford Middle School administration and staff, and program personnel of GEDC (Greensboro Education Development Council). We prepared flyers to go out to the parents trying to make them aware of what was happening and the purpose of it. A lot of communication was done and flyers served where no phone or personal contacts were possible. (Mrs. Murrill)(Interview 3/24/93)

Effective and continual communication between home, school, and community, they felt, would spell the difference between success or failure of this program. Great effort was expended to engage the parents and the community in the enhancement of educational opportunities this program sought to provide. Expanding Horizons was introduced to a community taking fledgling steps toward community empowerment, a community that was beginning to determine its own needs and bring about those changes. The goals, therefore, of this program involved having the community assessing their own needs and monitoring the program.

We announced an organizational meeting as it were, a fact finding mission on our part just to see what the needs were in the community as espoused by the community members themselves, instead of us already having something canned to deliver to the community. We wanted their input. I think that is a little non-traditional, because normally you have the program together, and you are going to go

and deliver it to the community. (Murrill)
(Interview 3/24/93)

After the fact-finding mission was accomplished and the needs and desires of the program identified, Mr. Bratcher, Mrs. Murrill, and a core of teachers from Guilford Middle School studied programs already intact that could meet the determined expressed community needs. This administrative and teacher core viewed themselves as "brokers" of those services. The community agencies involved in the program were the Greensboro Educational Development Council, Guilford College Branch Library, Guilford College Jaycees, Civitans, local colleges and universities, and the Greensboro City School's Family Resource Center.

First Impressions of "Expanding Horizons"

The researcher made several visits to the tutorial site prior to conducting interviews. The tutorial site is housed in the Westview Valley Community Center. The children constantly refer to it as the "office." During the fall of 1992 the researcher made several observations on an average of about every two weeks.

Visit Day 1

I found an orderly climate in which the students worked and conducted themselves. The home-like atmosphere is due to its furnishings. Two couches were arranged to give the

appearance of a den, which was separated from the work tables and chairs in the other section of the large room. Book-laddened shelves held a variety of reference materials, textbooks, and pleasure reading materials. Some students were unwinding and greeting other students as they arrived. The students were surprisingly happy at this extended school setting after having already put in a full school day. The tutor was observed making the greatest efforts to ensure that each child was on task. It is a most active place, a hub of activity.

After brief observation, it became evident that it is a well-ordered program. Two children paired up to work math problems on the blackboard and then copied answers on their homework sheet. Latena (tutor) was calling words to one student. One student was given the responsibility of retrieving folders and activity sheets for students from the filing cabinet. The students appeared to enjoy being there. As the younger students arrived, they hugged Latena. Work was constantly found for those students not having assignments. It appeared to be a massive undertaking for one person especially because of the multi-grade assignments of students ranging from kindergarten to middle school. Two students appeared to drop in long enough to complete assignments, get clarification of assignments, or borrow reference materials and leave. The children's work provided wall decoration.

Six students from Guilford College arrived during this visitation. The students' knew them by name, and they were paired with students that Latena selected. Some of the students greeted their tutor with hugs and moved to other areas of the room to work together. They appeared to talk and bond during the completion of assignments. One student appeared to be reluctant in having to work with the assigned tutor. It was difficult to know what the problem was, but I observed that after a while they appeared to work quite well together. A couple of students did not wish to have a tutor.

Visit Day 2

I inquired about the college students on the next visit, and Latena indicated that the tutors were from various local colleges. The student-tutors were from a Leisure Studies class at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, students in Education and Psychology from North Carolina A & T State University, along with the Bonner Scholars from Guilford College provided tutoring as an essential part of their course requirements. Students from the Leisure Studies class had devised incentive programs and solicited coupons and gifts from area businesses for the children as incentives for diligence in the completion of their school work.

Visit Day 3

Two new tutors were at the site on my next visit. One of the tutors, Sharon Entzminger, was overheard to say in response to the poor effort of a student on an assignment, "You want things to come easy? Life doesn't work like that." The child who was chided, surprisingly, went quickly back at work. Sharon has replaced Latena now on maternity leave, as lead tutor. Sharon remarked that the most difficult problem is not the lack of ability of the students but that they have found it much easier to quit: "Some of the children give up too quickly, and they are short on effort." Sharon quickly reaches the side of the less committed students and gets them back on task. She seems to connect the school assignments to life, and the children seem to make these connections as they continue to work independently.

Sharon refuses to allow a child to quit and can be heard chiding those with poor work habits. It was also observed that she expressed her love for the children in hugs and warm verbal comments. Her concern is observed even through her stern discourse with children who appear not to be working. She and Harold Cone, the other tutor, circulate to monitor the work of each child. Some children need more intense help and often tie the tutors up for long periods of time. It appears to be a difficult task as 17 children are in attendance on this particular day. Harold has a

different style in his approach with the children. Harold uses his sense of humor as his method of reaching and encouraging the students. Though they have a different style, it appears they are highly effective. It was interesting to see the older children stopping their assignment to help children experiencing difficulty. In a larger setting, as in the classroom with one teacher, it may be easier for some children to give up. At about 4:30 p.m. four students from N.C. A & T State University arrived. Each is directed to a child and administers a self-esteem survey, the Likert Scale. The students and tutors from the college appear a bit perplexed. The Likert Scale appears to be a difficult instrument for the students to respond, especially the younger children. One college student remarked that the children needed a lot of clarification of the questions in order to answer them in the mode requested. The Likert scale of the self-esteem instrument was difficult for the young students to discern and consistently use.

Visit Day 4

Harold was working alone with the children on a subsequent visit because Sharon was enrolled in an evening class. The children appeared restless, and Harold suggested a jumping rope contest. All of the children eagerly participated and competed for prizes. After about thirty minutes, some children (mostly boys) left. The younger

children settle down a bit reluctantly to their work. Students have begun to talk to the researcher and desire to know the reason for my presence. The visitation provided the opportunity to recognize many of the students by name, and feel comfortable enough to circulate and talk to them. Harold dismissed them early today so that maintenance could install new doors at the center due to recent break-ins.

Visit Day 5

The students readily respond to the questions of the researcher and accept suggestions concerning problems relating to their assignments. A few of the students are new while some of the students are no longer in regular attendance. Sharon informed me that many of the older girls are often needed to care for younger siblings; a couple of the students are engaged in school athletics. This day proved to be a special visit, the researcher spent nearly an hour talking with Tonia today. She was preparing a report on Booker T. Washington and appeared to be a bit agitated. The researcher sensed that she needed some assistance. It was suggested that she cross reference the information using the other books which were available. Her handwriting is beautiful, and so is her reading but her agitation resulted from the fact that she must orally report on Booker T. Washington. She was most unhappy about standing in front of the class, especially because she had been told she cannot

read the report. The researcher promised to listen to her presentation after she had gathered all the information. Her biggest difficulty was the pronunciation of Booker Washington's middle name, "Taliaferro." Tonia seemed to feel very comfortable with the researcher. She has recently enrolled in the program. She related having recently moved near here to live with her grandmother (her foster parent) and now attends Guilford Middle School. She transferred from Jackson Middle School located in Greensboro, and indicated she liked Guilford Middle because she was doing better work. Her statement was found to be interesting in that the researcher had taught six years at Jackson and believed it to be a school which nurtured students. Desiring to know why she was doing better at Guilford Middle, she remarked that she lived in a bad neighborhood in town, was frequently in trouble at school and in the neighborhood, and wasn't interested in doing her best school work. She also stated that Mr. Bratcher saw her in the hall and asked how she was doing. He suggested that after school tutorial might help her keep up in her work and wanted to know if she could attend. Tonia was unsure because she did not live within walking distance of the school nor did she live in Westview Valley. Mr. Bratcher indicated that he would call her grandmother and see if she would agree for her to attend. Tonia along with her brother and two other

children in the home began attending. Transportation for them was provided from the site by Harold or Sharon.

Tonia was observed at the dismissal of the program settling an argument for her brother who was involved in a squabble while waiting for their ride home. The researcher began to gain a sense of the other side of Tonia that she alluded to in our earlier conversation.

Visit Day 6

Tonia related that her class presentation went well. She seemed rather pleased with it except she still had difficulty with the pronunciation of "Taliaferro." Some of the children have serious reading and math difficulties, and the tutors must spend inordinate amounts of time with them. Harold and Sharon encouraged the students to use the pictures in the reading passages to grasp the stories' intent, or to use manipulatives in math for what would appear to be very easy problems for other students at this grade level to compute. It is still most interesting to note the students assisting each other in completing assignments when the tutors are unavailable, this is especially true with Kristin. Mr. Bratcher previously identified her as an academically gifted (AG) student. Kristin quickly finishes her assignment and offers to help others. Kristin represents the caliber of bright students enrolled in the program.

Visit Day 7

Chiquita McAllister was conducting a game she called the Compliment Game. Seven children were seated in a semi-circle around her. Each student was told to pay a compliment to the student who volunteered to be the recipient of the those compliments. Carlos was the first brave soul. What would have appeared to be an easy assignment the students found difficult. When prodded, they said nice things about shoes, clothing, and hair cuts, and some comments were most uncomplimentary. The lesson was intended to show that compliments need to be directed toward the personal qualities of another and are given to increase one's self-esteem and self-image. Mrs. McAllister then had another child to volunteer. Carlton became the second brave soul; little was her discussion heeded. Again and again they looked upon externals to make comment. Mrs. McAllister called the game off because the children apparently failed to grasp the intent of this lesson.

This exploratory phase consisting of studying available documents, conducting open-ended interviews, observing the program in action, and attending advisory meetings, provided the researcher with the possible parameters for the evaluation. These on-site observations provided the researcher with a sense of the program and its stated goals. The researcher in consultation with the dissertation advisor began to frame the orienting questions for this evaluation.

The focus questions for the interviews and the data evoked will appear under the following headings:

1. What parental linkages were established as a result of the "Expanding Horizons" program? -- Parental Linkages

2. Was there evidence of increased parent involvement with their children? --Evidence of Increased Parental Involvement

3. What community linkages with the school were outcomes of this program? --Community Linkages

4. What changes in the community's involvement in the lives of children has occurred? -Changes in the Community's Involvement in the Lives of Children

5. What activities do parents and community members engage to promote the well-being of children? -Parent and Community Involvement in Promoting the Well-Being of Children

6. What changes in behavior have developed among selected students that are related to the "Expanding Horizons" program based on the perceptions of key actors in the lives of students? -Changes in the Young People's Behavior

7. What changes in attitudes have developed among parents in this program? --Changes in Parent Attitudes

8. What changes in attitudes have developed in community members as a result of this program? -Changes in Community Attitudes

9. What are the outcomes and strengths of the program?

--Program Strengths and Outcomes

The data that follows are organized in this manner. Each orienting question is the basis for the major section. Each major section includes reflections/comments from the School-Administrative Perspectives, Program Director Perspectives, Program staff Perspectives, Parent Perspectives, Teacher Perspectives, Student Perspectives, and Community Member Perspectives. Not all questions were addressed by respondents in the various categories during the interview. A summary of the insights gleaned from those interviews is included at the end of each major section.

Parental Linkages

An important goal of Expanding Horizons was to encourage parents to become actively involved in the academic affairs of their children by creating open communication between the home and the school. It sought to bring them into an active relationship with the school. Guilford Middle School that took the first steps toward creating these parent-school linkages.

School Administrative Perspective. Guilford Middle School has made great strides in meeting the educational needs of students in the Westview Valley community. In keeping with its mission, "Expanding Horizons" is based on effective parental and community involvement. Mrs. Murrill

and Mr. Bratcher shared their insights concerning parent-school-program linkages. They believe communication to be the most essential element in the establishment of a climate that is conducive to such linkages.

We prepared flyers that went out to the parents trying to make them aware of what was happening and the purpose of it . . . I do know that kind of linkage was there for the parent. We designed a booklet to communicate from teacher to parent. That booklet was for students to write down their assignments and take it to the tutor or any student who may not have been in the program, who might have wanted one. It was a way of parents knowing exactly what homework that child had to do. So that was one means of communication with the parent. (Murrill) (Interview-March 24, 1993)

After the program began, these linkages became apparent.

What I'm asked to do oftentimes is to find out whether something their child has told them is true or not, verify some note that was sent home, or set up a conference with their child's teacher here at school. (Bratcher) (Interview-September 14, 1992).

Another important parental linkage was in setting up conferences at the convenience of parents. Guilford Middle School and Expanding Horizons were nontraditional in their approach in seeking parental contact with the school.

We have also had conferences where parents have come in on their own, but we have also had some conferences where we have brought the parents to the school. We have rearranged other times for some teachers to have the conferences. Sometimes parents can't come in the afternoon after school is over and can only come in the mornings. We

have had some conferences where our teachers have gotten here at 7:00 a.m. and conferences have been held at that particular time. (Bratcher)
(Interview-March 24, 1993)

Such effort on the part of the school has paid important dividends. Parents are brought into a working relationship with the school. Parents are now able to reinforce the efforts of the teacher and vice versa. Mr. Bratcher stated, "The teachers have seen the parent now and know that the parent is interested in what happens to their child. I see that as parental linkage." Even negative encounters can sometimes reap positive benefits.

The parent, although she was negative on that day, is now amenable to having conferences and those things which will help her child. She and others are getting involved. I'd rather for them to come into the school building, whether for negative or positive reasons, because we are establishing and want to keep that linkage. (Bratcher)(Interview-9/14/92)

Another linkage that has been established is that if parents don't come, they will at least call. An increasing number of parents call, asking me to intervene on their behalf to find out what's going on with their child. (Bratcher)(Interview 9/14/92)

Mr. Bratcher and Mrs. Murrill attribute an increase in parental linkages directly to their own community activities associated with the "Expanding Horizons" program.

We want them to feel comfortable coming into the school building. They are interacting with the school, I think, not only because of this program, but because they have seen us in their community and have had us in their homes. (Murrill)

Program Director Perspective. Mrs. McAllister along with Guilford Middle School administrators and teachers and members of the community made parental contacts. Prior to enrolling children into the program, parents were asked to come to an orientation meeting. Mrs. McAllister stated, "This was the beginning point of trying to get them involved in the program." They stressed the need for parents to become actively engaged in the program. Mrs. McAllister continued, "We feel instead of them just sending their child to the program, [parents] showing their interest and support and finding out the information [themselves] was essential for a good start." Since an important tenet of GEDC and "Expanding Horizons" was adult enrichment, they also provided parental education workshops to the community. McAllister expressed concern that too few parents were actively engaged in the educational affairs of their children and not enough participated in the programs offered for their own benefit: "We haven't had the response that we want, but we still have a core number of parents that come out and take advantage of the education courses." Some of the programs offered were on topics of parent-teacher conferences and communication workshops providing information needed to effectively communicate with children.

We haven't had the response we would like to see; but hopefully as we become more familiar with those parents, then they will feel more comfortable coming out. That has been the case with the children. Initially, the children and

parents would go with us when we had field trips. Their participation has now become more of a habit and we (the program and personnel) are more of a mainstay in the community. (McAllister)(Interview 3/2/93)

Teacher Perspective. Mrs. Diggs, a sixth grade teacher at Guilford Middle School in an interview on February 2, 1993 addressed the issue of parental linkages made as a result of the program.

In the school as well as the classroom, they (parents from the Valley) came to parent conferences more readily and asked more questions. If a child went home with a bad report, parents were not reluctant to call and set up a conference.

She stated that those parents whose children were actively engaged in Expanding Horizons became active in the educational program of their child.

You might say the parents became partners with the teacher more so after this program was established. If you called a parent, especially in my case, they looked at it as something positive coming out of it, not necessarily something negative as a result of the call. They wanted to know if the child was getting his work done. (Diggs)

Additionally, Mrs. Diggs remarked that during an interview with a parent: "The mother wanted to know why her child was not doing well." The mother followed through by working with her child at home.

Program Personnel Perspectives.

In response to the parents getting involved, I really noticed one, maybe two to three. But one in particular is Lisa Harris. Mrs. Harris comes to the program everyday, she gets involved, and she gets involved with her daughter. (Harold Cone)(interview 10/8/92)

Ann has done well . . . in her grades and her mother is pleased. Plus by her being a part of the program and participating, the children see that she's motivated; and it therefore motivates the kids. (Sharon Entzminger)

Sharon suggested there is evidence of parent support even though parents are not actively engaged in the program. She calls it "home support."

Kristin's mother can no longer come down, but you know she is very supportive of Kristin. . . Kristin is doing exceptionally well in school, plus she is motivated about her work . . . she enjoys material that is above her level. But as for her mother I've seen her here only once. She now works at the school (Guilford Middle) so that makes a difference. Kristin has a mother at the school, and she is a part of her daughter's educational program, so she can't help but do well. (Interview 10/8/92)

Sharon suggests other evidences of this "home support."

I feel that there are some parents who are supportive, even though you might not see them come into the program. But you can see it in their children's report cards. For instance, Keith, is doing well, and so are Kristin, Kiara, and Shannon. So you know even though the parents don't come you can see some improvement in the grades . . . When you go talk to the parents you can pick up on that support because if there is something I want normally they would very much try

to help me get it. So even though they don't come, there is support. (Interview 10/8/92)

Parental Perspective. Mrs. Harris has two children in the program, Ann and Larry. She was visibly proud of her linkages with the program and with the school.

I used to get notes from the teacher saying how Ann was doing, but still the teacher wanted me to come over to the school for a conference. In the past, I never wanted to go to the school because I didn't know what to say to the teacher; and I didn't know if the teacher was going to say something bad about my child. But now this is Ann's fourth grade or fourth year in school, and she is really getting something out of school now. I can call the teacher. If I don't go over to the school, we can have phone conference where she tells me how Ann is doing. (Interview 5/17/93)

Mrs. Harris became active in the education of her children at home. She remarked that Ann had been a "satisfactory student" in kindergarten and made honor roll in grades one and two. Mrs. Harris added, "By the time she got in the third grade, her grades went down from a B to a D." An important linkage was Mrs. Harris' daily involvement in the tutorial program. Her involvement ensured that Ann and Larry were behaving, as well as offering her assistance to the tutors in whatever way possible. She is insistent that there are rewards to Expanding Horizons: "This year, her fourth grade year, her grades have gone from a D to an C-B average." Mrs. Harris' active involvement in the program became the impetus that extended also to the school.

I would talk to the teacher to find out if there

was anything that I could do while I was at home with her. Ann was having problems with her division and multiplication. I made flash cards at home, and the teacher did the same thing. And we worked together. With Larry, it is the same way. Larry will be [in] first grade next year, and the same cards I made for Ann I use them on him to help him. I have table mats on my kitchen table. One for Ann that has multiplication and division. The other is for Larry that has adding and subtraction. When they have math homework, they don't have to use their hands when it is right there on the table mat. They use that, and it helps them a lot. Even though Ann has a calculator, she prefers using the table mat. (Interview 5/17/93)

Other parents made similar comments on the effectiveness of such linkages with the program and its leading to effective correspondence with the school. Mrs. Grace stated, "The tutors would come and talk to us, or even go to the school with us, for example, when the children got progress reports." She stated:

They [program personnel] got in contact with the parents and told us how they did and in what subjects they needed help and what we could do to help them improve. The assistant principal came and talked to some of the parents. The parents who had kids down there were very supportive and got involved. The grades improved, but their attendance had to be a steady thing otherwise the grades would fall back down. (Mrs. Grace)
(Interview 5/18/93)

Some parents would volunteer some time with the program. Those parents who attended were quite often concerned by the small number of parents who were actually involved. One parent suggested why her attendance was sporadic:

Most of the time some of the parents don't want to come. I have been down there, but I get off work late. But as I told her [Sharon], if I come down there and Lisa sees me, she will start to cry and will want to come back with me. So I told her I was not going to come. Lisa doesn't want to learn, she wants to play. The tutor does make Lisa get in her books. (Mrs. Yusef) (Interview 5/26/93)

Mrs. Wade is the mother of Kristin (grade 6) and works as classroom assistant at Guilford Middle School. She made daily visits to the center when the program began.

I became a volunteer so they would have somebody there to be over the children to help with discipline. Most of the time it was just me by myself, and I would go down there while the tutors were there. After they would leave, I would be there to clean up the center. It was just me at the beginning. (Interview 3/2/93)

Early in the program, there were more parents involved in the program. Some of the parents said that fewer and fewer came because they assumed someone else would be there. Those involved with the program began to think of ways to link other parents with the program.

We asked parents to drop in and sit for an hour or so . . . it wouldn't be the same person every day to discipline the children. I know of one parent, that's Maruka's mom, comes everyday just for a few minutes. It's good if they can just come and show their faces and sit for fifteen or twenty minutes at the most. (Mrs. Wade)(Interview 3/2/93)

Having observed the positive influence of the program on grades and behavior of students, Mrs. Wade stressed a desire that other parents would become active.

If we can just get more parents involved. It is a lot of kids that really need the tutoring; and the parents are not behind them to make them go, so they are not going to go. They just run around playing when they should be at the center. Unfortunately, some parents are just afraid to go down there or are not willing or just don't care. (Interview 3/2/93)

Mrs. Yusef is the mother of two of the children in the program, Traci (seventh grade) and Lisa (third grade). She is impressed with the school's efforts in maintaining parental linkages with the school. Her linkage was established and maintained through the program.

They kept me informed, and the school kept in touch with the tutor. I would go visit with the principal about her grades; they would tell me different things about her and I would work with her on it. She (Traci) is really doing good. (Interview 5/26/93)

It is clear from the perspectives above that there has been increased involvement of parents in the school and in the tutorial program. What is also apparent is that the number of parents involved is far less than are needed. It is quite interesting to talk with those parents who have experienced new and positive relationships concerning the education of their children.

Evidence of Increased Parental Involvement

School Administrative Perspective.

They would come to PTA meetings, but they would not come in large numbers. They still aren't

coming in large numbers; however, more are getting into the schools. Sometimes for negative reasons, nevertheless, we are still getting them here usually when we ask them. . . .

Some parents came in to help with the actual tutoring itself. Some of the parents, I'm sure Ms. Proctor will probably mention it to you, served as block captains. Some of them served in a hands-on way; and some of them put the tables together, because we just had the tables delivered. (Bratcher)(Interview 9/17/92)

Parental involvement continued to come through the activities of the community resident council. Mr. Bratcher indicated, "They started taking a more active roll in the community from the standpoint of letting the property manager know what they wanted for the community." It was through parent involvement that the center became the site of the tutorial program because the office manager did not wish to have it at the office.

Program Administrator Perspective. Bratcher stated, "As far as the evidence of increased parent involvement, I don't have actual numbers . . . ,but we do see that there is a core group of parents that come by." Large numbers of parents involved in the program has not yet occurred. Mrs. McAllister is considering an idea for increasing this involvement:

We have come up with an idea of trying to put a task basket at each site that will give specific tasks that we would want the parent to do. Because I feel that in talking with some of the parents, a lot of them feel intimidated about coming to a tutorial program and helping out

because they feel inadequate to help with the tutoring. I think that if we are more specific with how we want them to help out, then we might get more involvement. Once we get them there, they will feel more comfortable about helping out from the educational end. (interview 3/2/93)

Teacher Perspective. Mrs. Diggs insisted that increased parental involvement was an outcome of the program: "We have our little breakfasts at advisor-advisee time. The black parents haven't been that active at our parties, but I have seen a big difference now." Parents, she notes, are now engaged in the planning of school activities: "One mother in particular went to the bakery and brought a decorated cake . . . that was very unusual for the program. I think it came as a result they feel like they are a part of the school."

Program Personnel Perspectives. Sharon Entzminger is the mother of twins, Danielle and Shantell who are in the second grade. She is also a tutor for Expanding Horizons at the center. Sharon graduated in May with a degree in mathematics, and is presently enrolled in the Graduate School at North Carolina A & T State University. Sharon is a single parent and a resident of Westview Valley. Her roles with the program are diverse because of her residence in the community. Sharon offered tremendous insights into the lives of children. She notes that parental involvement is crucial in the lives of children, and sees the program as a catalyst for creating this involvement at the center:

Often when parents would get report cards, they would wonder why their children were not doing so well and what could be done because they would say they don't know how to help. This showed me the parents want to help. (Interview 10/8/92)

Sharon was sought by parents after hours when children had problems.

They would even come to my house since I stay out here. I had one parent bring her little girl to me at nine o'clock at night needing some help, and, of course, I took the time because she needed help. (Interview 10/8/92)

Sharon insisted that most parents have a desire to help their children but may be limited by their own education. Children had often related to Sharon that their mother had tried to help but could not.

If parents don't understand, many of them will come to me and say Sharon would you help my daughter do such and such because I really don't understand. Whereas some of the parents just send them up here, and I'll work with them. This is involvement, even those who just come to me personally. (Interview 10/8/92)

Parental Perspectives. Mrs. Smith is Ginger's mother. Ginger is in third grade and an "A-B" student. Her mother states:

I think that the parents here get more involved knowing that there is someone down there that cares about their children and willing to help the children out. Before the program I think the parents cared about what happened to the their children, but now there is someone down there to encourage them to do better in school. I think that helps a lot. (interview 4/29/93)

Mrs. Smith remarked, "Some parents insist that their children to go down there, to learn and to do better in school. By the parents encouraging the children, that gives the children greater incentive to do well." As more individuals involve themselves in the academic affairs of students, the point is being made that education is important. Joining forces with the school are the efforts of parents, tutors, and community volunteers lending their support to the children in the program.

Mrs. Smith cites something else that is very important.

It encourages students to go to school and to do their best. What they don't understand they will ask questions about. If a child asks the teacher questions about things they don't understand, it helps a lot. It gets the teachers more involved in helping the students. (Interview 4/29/93)

Mrs. Smith only occasionally makes a visit to the program. She represents those parents who render support of the program from home and insists on her child's attendance. She speaks for other parents who may be unable to participate in tutoring at the center.

I think there could be more parent involvement. It is probably one or two children out of the entire household that really goes down there, so I think that parents want to get involved but you have other children at home where you can't go down there and be involved like you should. In my situation, I have a four-year old son who is autistic who has a learning problem. I can't just go down there and spend time with Ginger because I have a responsibility at home as well. (Interview 4/29/93)

Ginger has the benefit of her work being checked twice, at the tutorial and at home. Mrs. Smith said,* "When Ginger comes home, I make sure she has done her work, find out if she had a nice time, ask if there were any problems since I can't go down there and participate."

Mrs. Yusef lends her support to the program by insisting on Lisa's attendance. Lisa came home from the program one day angry because the tutor insisted that she sit down and get her work done. Mrs. Yusef said, "I told her to go on back down there; that was her job."

Mrs. Wade indicates that a waning of parental involvement is actually occurring. Her involvement is now mainly at Guilford Middle School.

When we first started out, parents did show an interest. They were down there to find out about the program. We had some to sign up as volunteers, but after a while it lagged off and few ever showed up. Like I said, when we first started out, I was the only one there everyday. (Interview 3/2/93)

Many parents attended special programs and outings.

Some of the parents did come to the awards presentation that they had or if we needed chaperons for field trips a couple of the parents did go. . . it was usually the same ones. I know Mable Grace was active for a while. I know of one parent that did go to the school. . . .

I know of another parent who got involved because she came and used my phone to set up a conference with her child's teacher. She was concerned about her child's grades. (Mrs. Harris) (Interview 5/17/93)

I've heard some parents talking about the program. They want to get involved, but they don't know what to do. (Mrs. Wade) (Interview 3/2/93)

Mrs. Harris who visits the program daily, says other parents haven't been coming. It appears others don't come when they feel another parent is attending and it creates an unfair burden. Monitoring the behavior of children is a difficult endeavor.

A lot of parents were coming at one time. Not many come now. They would say I don't have to go because Lisa Harris is there. Lisa is a parent; and she is down there with the kids. And she has children down there as well. (Interview 5/17/93)

Mrs. Grace was actively involved in "Expanding Horizons" for the first two years. She was actively involved in the Westview Valley Community Association as program coordinator for youth activities. Mrs. Grace presently provides after school care in her home. She is aware through her own children who are in the program of the involvement of Mrs. Harris: "Ann, Lisa Harris' daughter, was having problems . . . then her grades improved. Her mother was concerned about her and stayed in contact with the tutor and the teachers. She started participating in the program to learn more about it."

Community Linkages

This program is unique in that it enlists the efforts of the community along with parents in helping to create for students an environment which values schooling and academic success. Guilford Middle School's Expanding Horizons sought nothing less than the commitment of the school, home, and community. Through community meetings and working through the resident council, a program representing their expressed needs was begun. Mr. Bratcher is pleased with the community's involvement, but wishes it to increase: "When you have a program in the school and you ask parents to come out, of course, you get very little participation." This program afforded parents and the community access because of its location, and it was offered in response to the needs of this particular community. What this program offered was alternate means of parental involvement. "There are still some parents who have not yet interacted with the school directly but have ventured to engage, even if sporadically, in community programs related to Expanding Horizons at the center," stated Mr. Bratcher.

Program Director Perspective. Mrs. McAllister was concerned that the larger community become aware of and assist in the program at Westview Valley. Volunteers serving as tutors in the program constituted one type of community linkage.

We solicited volunteers from the community in general through the Volunteer Action Center, and also through college campuses. We have signed agreements with North Carolina A & T Department of Education and Psychology, volunteers from the Social Work Department and the Leisure Studies Classes at UNCG. We also used Bonner Scholars and the Guilford College Literacy Corps Scholars. The volunteers have different reasons for coming to "Expanding Horizons", whether for personal fulfillment or a class requirement or the desire to get practical experience working with children. (Interview 3/2/93)

An important message emanated from the involvement of these volunteers. The students felt important as these individuals gave of their time to help them.

GEDC created other linkages of organization to Westview Valley. Mrs. McAllister indicated that there are about 50 coordinating agencies set up to meet the needs of communities. All too often, those of poor communities may be unaware of those programs and the services offered.

Some of the organizations that we use as resources are the Community Theater of the Cultural Center, and we registered parents to vote through the Board of Elections. The American Red Cross provided standard First Aid and CPR training for parents and tutors. The Family Life Council did workshops on responsibility, and GATE provided transportation. Workshops on a variety of topics were sponsored by the Greensboro City Schools' Family Resource Center. (Interview 3/2/93)

GEDC tapped into those programs that could provide services, resources, and support to the community.

Another thing we have done to involve the community is we are putting together a document that will enable all organizations to find after-

school programs to better meet the needs of their children. . . . We are located in five different locations. . . . As we interact more and more with the schools, we are finding that there are other students that could utilize a program like this.

Mrs. McAllister states that program improvement is an important goal of GEDC.

As an offshoot of our idea is to formulate this document, we are also going to be planning a conference that will be held twice a year. We are going to convene and bring together all of the different organizations to share ideas and resources and basically to bring the quality of those programs up to what we feel is standard for an after-school program.

Teacher Perspective. A book fair was held at Guilford Middle School. Through this endeavor new books were sold and used books from the media center and those donated by the parents were made available to the community. Sets of encyclopedia were made available to families in need of them. This represented a school endeavor to meet the needs of poor families in the community.

Right off hand I can think of one instance where I saw parents and the community involved in the school. That was when we had our book fair. Parents and members from the community came out to purchase and get free books. Many parents brought the children, and also some of the parents assisted with the book fair. (Mrs. Diggs)(Interview 2/3/93)

Program Personnel Perspectives

Program personnel are creating the linkages to parents in the community with the school.

Now parents will come to the program to see how their children are doing, but as far as how many are attending the school I cannot say. (Sharon)

I talk to the principal for the parents and visit the school to make sure everything is okay . . . if the parent needs to contact teachers but, feels uncomfortable about going, I go with them. (Sharon) (Interview 1/28/93)

Maruka's mother will talk to us about her problems, then we can consult the school about them [problems] for her. (Harold) (Interview 11/24/92)

The school appears to be doing its part in creating the linkages to the community.

The school is a vital force in the community. . . . They work with the community in trying to enhance the learning ability of children. For instance, Mr. Bratcher has been very supportive as far as providing the T.V. and educational videos. They concern the solar system, how to write essays, or reading. As far as the community, many of them [parents and other community members] are not as supportive as they should be. But the school does try to get involved with the community because they want to see the community excel. You know they've already labeled this community. We have so many kids that can't read; and some who can't do math. So the school is trying to push the community to get involved. (Harold)(Interview 2/9/93)

Parent Perspectives. A number of community linkages were established through school related programs. In addition to the book fair, food drives were held around the holidays; and toys were also collected. Mrs. Grace pointed with pride at the set of encyclopedia. "We got some of them at the book fair which allows Traci to help Lisa with her

homework." Mrs. Grace also noted that during Thanksgiving and Christmas her family had been recipients of both food and toys.

Many other parents profited from the endeavors of the school in meeting the needs of this community.

During Christmas Mr. Bratcher, and Mrs. Murrill came here to meet parents and to deliver Christmas stockings. As a matter of fact, myself and another lady that lives around here delivered them door to door. (Mrs. Wade) (Interview 3/2/93)

School-community linkages resulted through Expanding Horizons. The program provided additional contact persons with the school. The tutors served as liaisons for parents who needed their support in school related affairs of their children. Because of the visibility of Mr. Bratcher in the community, many parents of children in the program felt more comfortable coming to or calling the school.

I would get in contact with the assistant principal. Sometimes the tutors would get in contact with the assistant principal and the teacher about their grades to give us [parents] some input about what they were failing in . . . When progress reports came, we would go back to the teacher and question them. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Mrs. Grace indicated that Guilford Middle School sponsored seminars and programs. These programs were offered at the community center. Some of the topics related to child safety, drug awareness, and study skills seminars. "Most of the kids going to the program were from Guilford

Middle. Guilford Middle was very active here and participated a lot, especially the Assistant Principal, Mr. Bratcher."

The assistant principal at Guilford Middle would come out and look around and evaluate how things were going. They gave the kids encyclopedias and paper. Picnic tables were also provided for outdoor activities. Guilford Middle did good. For a fact I know they were wonderful. They would come out and observe and participate. We had little programs where people would come in and talk to the kids. (Mrs. Hunt) (Interview 5/17/93)

Expanding Horizons was brought to a community experienced in citing its needs. It was a community ready to dispel the myriad of myths concerning the poor. The program testifies of people who do indeed care about themselves and their children. This self-help program provided speakers and workshop that would further empower them as parents, community members, and citizens.

The programs were especially helpful to the children. They (society) label low-income people and act as if they don't know anything. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Changes in the Community's Involvement in the Lives of Children

Parent Perspectives. Evidence of the "Community Watch" still lingers. Three of the parents interviewed were active members of the resident council. Though the resident council activity is waning these parents were still actively

assuming watch care over their respective areas of the community.

It is not a community if every one just looks out for themselves. We [parents] look out for each others children. Not all parents have time for the kids. There are other parents who are looking out for the them. If they see the kids doing something wrong, they will stop them or take them to their parents. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Mrs. Harris failed to see positive changes in the community's attitudes: "The community's attitudes have not changed. We still need to have the Community Watch and parents need to stick together. Being careful to look out for each other." It was evident that some of the hard feelings still lingered resulting from the community watch.

We need some of these parents to mind their business. They watch to see who goes in and out of these houses and that is not right. There are very nosey folks out here, and that is why people don't get along because they are into each others business. (Harris) (Interview 5/17/93)

Program Director Perspectives. The community perceived the center as a safe place for children where good things were going on as verified by report cards and interim reports.

After talking with some of the parents, after taking the kids to the library for instance, we have found that the parents were shocked that the children don't want to always get on the Nintendo or watch TV, but will sometimes pick up a book. They are just pleasantly surprised at the change

that has occurred because of their child's involvement in the program. (Interview 3/2/93)

The adage, "Success begets success," might aptly describe the change in the attitudes of the community for the program. When parents see the difference made in the children, they become greater advocates of the program. The children find the program to be advantageous to them in homework completion.

We have also found in dealing with the children on an individual basis, that instead of us having to drag their homework assignment out of them and for them to tell falsehoods about whether they have homework, they are now very excited to bring in their homework assignments and to get started. . .

Another indication is that sometimes I might go out into the community and, say for instance, my tutors are sick and I'm having to go by and put up the sign saying that we are not open on that particular day, how many kids are very disappointed because they are not able to go. It is not necessarily just because they don't have help for their homework, but they look forward to identifying with that group of people.
(McAllister) (Interview 3/2/93)

Parent and Community Involvement in Promoting the Well-being of Children

School Administrative Perspective. In addition to parents watching out for children, programs were planned that encouraged the attendance of all residents of the community. Increasing the social contacts of members of the community allowed the children as well as the adults to view each

other in a more positive light. The behavior of the children was especially noted by Mr. Bratcher.

I was shocked Christmas two years ago that the elderly came out to a Christmas party that Mrs. Proctor helped sponsor. They were there in large numbers. I was also amazed at how well behaved the students were, particularly the older ones.

As a result of such interaction, members of the community coming together shows evidence of respect and concern.

One kid that I had just suspended from school was on his very best behavior allowing the elderly to come up and eat first. That amazed me because he did not normally act like that. He was not a part of the program, but he came in to eat, which was fine. (Bratcher) (Interview 5/14/93)

The older children not attending the program often reap some of the benefits that their younger siblings in the program enjoy. They are invited to attend any and all of the programs and activities sponsored by GEDC and Guilford Middle School. This is a means of keeping in contact with this older group of youngsters.

The younger ones make up most of the students that are being served in a formal sense . . . Even though some of the older one's don't come, we still have a way of plugging them into positive things, catching them, oftentimes, before they get into trouble. (Interview 5/14/93)

The program seeks any avenue that creates community "good will." Keeping the line of communication open with

families of children in the program led to direct contacts to those students who were not in the program.

We're having good relationships with parents as a result of that, or having a good relationship with a relative of that parent that we can't get to. Sometimes we can get a relative in; sometimes we can get a message to the parent through the relative. We do quite a bit of that because we know where they live and we see them in the community when we interact. They might not attend but their little brother or sister attends. (Interview 5/14/93)

Program Director Perspectives.

I can think of different field trips that we have and invite the parents to come along. They have been very helpful when we go to a certain park and have a picnic. We try to encourage them to go to museums and art shows, not only for their personal benefit, but to also show the children that they want to be involved. Many times you get responses from the children: "Oh, my mom doesn't care," and we feel that this is a way to show children that they do care. (Mrs. McAllister) (Interview 3/2/93)

Mrs. McAllister suggested that volunteers working with Expanding Horizons may increase the levels of personal well being, self-esteem, and motivation of children in the program.

I think we've done a good job reinforcing the idea of volunteerism. Initially the children were suspicious of volunteers coming into the program. They wanted to know why they were there; why do they want to help? Now they get very excited. You can see their faces in the windows as you walk up to the sites. . . . I always tease them and say "You just love to have company don't you?" It makes them feel special.

We found that even though some of the children didn't have problems with their grades, they had problems with their self-esteem, and we wanted them to at least maintain their level of motivation in school. And we felt that the one-on-one associations with the volunteers was the best way to help them feel better about themselves. (Interview 3/2/93)

Program Personnel Perspectives. The resident council had selected Mrs. Grace to work with the young people. She planned and executed programs that would keep the young people engaged in organized endeavors during the summer. Sharon mentioned, "I know Mrs. Grace has parties, little games, bingo. The programs keep the children thinking during the summer."

The participation of the parents and community members is requested for programs and field trips. Many of the parents are provided learning opportunities along with the children.

We provided a number of outings for the children and their parents. We went to UNCG and enjoyed a Halloween party put on by the students there. A visit was made to the Greensboro Historical Museum to see the Real McCoy exhibit, and we exposed them to the arts, educational programs, and plays. (Sharon) (Interview 1/28/93)

The awards program gave the community the opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the children. "We had awards programs and every child excelling at school was recognized."

Community Council Perspective. Armed with school and community support, the committee, under the leadership of Mrs. Proctor, set out to tackle what they viewed as their most pressing problems. They are particularly proud of those changes that increased the safety of their children.

At one time we had the children out here, and we are speaking of the primary children being picked up on Guilford College Road in the mornings, say at 7:30, for school, or 7:00 whenever they get them, and Guilford College if you know the area, is between I-40, West Market, and Friendly. So that time of the morning, you get people that are coming out here or going into town to work, and it was very dangerous. I, along with others, made calls to the City of Greensboro Engineering and the Planning Department, Western Guilford, and the school system, to get those children off of Guilford College Road in the mornings and in the evenings also. After going through some changes and getting this management company out here to agree to let the school buses come in here on this property, because they wouldn't even let the drivers that lived out here park their buses out here, we finally got them to agree to that. So the school buses could come around the circle in the morning and pick up kids as opposed to picking them up on a very busy thoroughfare. (Interview 2/18/93)

The community council worked for youngsters in attaining recreational facilities. Westview Valley did not provide recreational facilities for the children. The young men, because they were at a great distance from city parks, were desirous of a basketball court. It was the council that worked in their behalf.

The council sought recreational facilities for the younger children. After a time a small park with

equipment for the children was provided through the efforts of the council.

The safety of the community was another important issue tackled by the council. Prior to city annexation, Guilford College had little police surveillance and became a hangout for urban youth to carry out, in some cases, illegal activity. It was the council that sought help from the Greensboro Police Department to monitor the strange behaviors some residents were noting but were afraid to tackle independently.

We were annexed into the City of Greensboro about 1985. A few months after that, the Police Department with the management . . . asked us to meet in the office; because at that time, there were some boys from the "Grove" [one of the city housing projects] and some young men from this community who were called the "Snack Dogs" involved in a confrontation in town which they brought out here. There was shooting and the threat of a gang fight in this community. The police came out; this was just before the police came out to see if we would work to get our community watch going. They cornered [cordoned] off this area out here and you couldn't even get in here in the evenings. I was working at night so I would have to leave. I took my son uptown for my mother to keep because I didn't want him out here. It was sort of a tense situation. After that, the Greensboro Police Department, with Officer Anderson, I think, in charge of the community watch. They asked a group of us to come down and talk about the incident and what we could do about it. I didn't know anything about it, only what was mentioned at the meeting and what I'd heard from different residents. One of my neighbors who lived on the end had observed strange behaviors several times, just coming in from work at night. One night someone was shooting up at the circle of the apartment where she lived and she was afraid to come in . . . We've had any number of break-ins, fights--teenage

fights, adult fights, or anything that any community would probably have especially when there is a high concentration of low-income people. (Interview 2/18/93)

The problems associated with drugs were also manifested in the community and were addressed by the council.

There was always the talk of drugs being sold and dealt very openly out here at one time. I didn't live here then. I talked with a number of people that I know in the community who said they knew of a certain kind of activity late at night, having seen young men putting things in a drain pipe and seeing someone else later on come and pick it up. You were hearing this kind of stuff We talked about this at our meetings and we started getting information about what we could do to correct those problems.

Mrs. Proctor described that time as a "community under siege."

When you got out and watched certain things, you knew something was going on in specific houses because of the kind of traffic they were getting. This was day and night. You became very well aware of what was going on in your community At one point I would go into my apartment, go to the grocery store, and go to work; and I didn't look either way because I didn't care. I didn't want to be involved in anything. I functioned that way a long time out here simply to have peace of mind. Basically, in the back of my head I knew what could happen. You just put blinders on, but you really can't live that way. It was just an extremely bad situation where children could have been hurt. If you worked, you couldn't sleep at night because of the noise and problems that were going on outside of your window. The senior citizens were being harassed and bothered; I mean, it was just like you had better stay in your apartment and keep your mouth shut or don't think about it. Just get absorbed in your own life that was the only way you could cope. Our lives were like those of people who lived in Beirut or

somewhere where people live in that constant kind of existence. But this was in America, we're at home; and we were living under siege. (Interview 2/18/93)

Through the efforts of a few residents, reclaiming the community began in earnest. Personal, home, and community safety were important components of a newly established "community watch" program.

I and about five or six other women signed this whole community up for the community watch and that would be everybody in the area getting information on how to secure and make sure their back patio door has a stick or a nail in it, and the same thing with your windows. We worked to get door plates on each door. We made sure the residents got all that information, how to report, who to call in emergencies . . . to make sure when you called that your message was understood. Just everything that they asked us to do, we did.

For a time tremendous effort and cooperation were manifested through resident council activity. Little by little support began to wane, in many cases, out of fear. Threatening telephone calls to members of the council and acts of vandalism to their property pales in comparison to the mental harassment they suffered. Some tenants felt their lifestyle was threatened and responded in ways to deter the efforts of the community resident council. Only a few of the original council members remained undaunted and persevered to complete the goals they had set out to accomplish. "As it turned out, about two of us were the only ones doing the work by the time it was over," stated

Mrs. Proctor. Interpersonal conflicts began to emerge within the council. Then, as it is with many groups, the infighting and jealousies began to erupt. Mrs. Proctor implied, "That will tear down any group that's trying to accomplish something. You always have to deal with things like that when you deal with people. You just try to keep a clear head." The major problem that began to emerge was distrust of the council and Mrs. Proctor in particular. The establishment of the "community watch" afforded the seven block captains information that, if reported to the authorities, could have resulted in evictions. "I was already working on so many other things, and I didn't want to be involved in the "community watch," because as president, I knew the problems that it could cause and it did. It was, 'Mrs. Proctor reports to the police'," she said. Though seven people were selected and trained by the police department, it appeared that the brunt of the scorn was borne by the resident council president.

I resented the reputation, but there were problems the police needed to be aware of. I'm definitely sure they needed to be involved. But not to the point of having someone with a certain mentality tearing up my car, harassing my son and me, and threatening me with verbal abuse. Those are the hard times you go through, and especially where drugs are involved.

The council made tremendous strides in providing a safe environment for the elderly residents. "The older adults were afraid to come out of their homes," replied Mrs.

Proctor. Young people were seen as a threat to their safety. The needs of the elderly and the young people had to be addressed. Picnics and dinners were sponsored; and young people, having been viewed with suspicion, were encouraged to escort the elderly. These outings provided opportunities for the elderly to network with the community. Additionally, the young people were given the opportunity to interact socially with them. Tremendous effort was expended to create a sense of community involvement and unity.

Children, like adults, need a safe and nurturing community to gain a strong sense of self. It was with this goal in mind that efforts were made to knit this community together.

Sometimes I think it is harder for young people now. It may be that it is easier for them to lose sight of themselves and their goals or get a little disheartened because they are coming up in a different time than in my time . . . I feel that I've been blessed in my life because I had the benefit of coming up in a community that was nurturing . . . We had the benefit of people like Dr. Martin Luther King, and just all of the great Black people that you hear about now. During the time I was coming up, it was very important. You knew about these people. If you didn't know them personally, you heard of them and that, in a way, sort of gave you strength.

To create a sense of community involvement, banquets, dinners, picnics, and parties were planned with every resident in mind.

For instance, we had a Halloween party . . . all the kids were invited to this really great party,

I mean as far as preparing the decorations and planning the activities. Everyone in the community was asked to either donate either candy or whatever to make it a good party; which they did. It was really, really nice.

The initial resident committee consisted of nearly fifty percent of the residents serving in some capacity. "The biggest group were the senior citizens, and they always loved to come out to the meetings and were most helpful," stated Mrs. Proctor. Many positive results ensued from this resident council. Reduction in vandalism was noted, as well as improved behavior of the children. Mrs. Proctor remarked that she doesn't hear as many negative comments from residents about the behavior of children in the community as far as getting into trouble. There is evidence of the lingering effects of the tremendous amount of work accomplished by this council. She is concerned that there will always be complex problems resulting when the poor are so closely congregated. There are those who take advantage of the many single parent females, robbing them and their children of their livelihood, dignity, and self-esteem. Unfortunately, the children are those who suffer most. A strong message emanating from the resident council was that a good education is the means of escaping the present conditions under which they live. Not only was education of the young addressed by the council, but also, adult education as well. The General Education Diploma (GED) program provided educational opportunities for the adult

residents and was sponsored by Guilford Technical Community College. This program, like the Expanding Horizons, was offered at the community center and 20 adults consented to work toward the completion of their GEDs. The program was made available to adults from surrounding communities as well.

With that many people involved, they were willing to send us a tutor out here; and we operated for about two months. But because of various reasons, only eight to ten would show up; and they weren't willing to continue the program with only eight to ten. We had so much wanted them to, because that would be eight adults that would have a diploma by now.

It was during this time that a plan for the implementation of the home-school-community program "Expanding Horizons" was being formulated. Based on the school's mission statement, Guilford Middle School sought to work through this targeted community to bring it into an effective working relationship with that of the school. "So when Mr. Bratcher approached us with the idea of the tutorial, we were really interested and requested to know what we could do," Mrs. Proctor replied. The community was very excited about Expanding Horizons. During the first year, parent participation was very high. The parents and children were involved and very interested. Due to high parent participation, Mrs. Proctor and the council were free to address other community concerns. The council provided proper representation of its diverse community. Mrs. Grace

was elected to work with the youth in providing programs apart from Expanding Horizons. The youth were given a medium through which to voice their concerns.

Mrs. Proctor is most proud of the connections and associations she has made. These agencies and various persons provided invaluable help in securing the services needed by the community. Her address book bears testimony of these many connections.

When asked about her trials and hardships, it was obvious that she values the results of such labors expended for the good of the neighborhood.

I say maybe I'm the fool in a sense because I didn't realize or understand the fear that my children or my other family members felt for what I was doing. When you're changing someone's life or you're even upsetting someone's life[style], there is always the possibility that you might get hurt. I didn't think about that consciously every day, only when an instance would come up and I was threatened and I guess I would just deal with the threat and say that's it. I never supposed that anyone would shoot me in the back. Though they messed up my car and cursed me and my son out. I just never worried too much about what could happen. I guess I just always knew that I was in God's hands anyway. That's regardless to whether I'm here or anywhere I live.

The community has changed and benefitted from the work of many community residents. They identified and affected changes that attempted to provide for all the residents--a safer, better, and empowered community. Major problems were tackled by the community council with risks to themselves and their families. At present Mrs. Proctor is unable to

serve as council president due to health problems, but it is evident from talking with her that her heart and interest is still very much with the program.

With the two or three years that we worked with this, I probably have done some things that I regret. But, basically I hope somewhere along the way someone will say that I've done something good to help somebody. Because of my health concerns, I would not be willing to serve again as president.

Reclaiming the Westview Valley community and empowering the citizens was accomplished through difficult work and physical and emotional peril. The efforts expended by the council and the residents for the benefit of the community at large are to be applauded. The way was paved for a program specifically targeted at the school-age children. A program in their own community designed to be monitored by community residents.

Parental Perspectives. Mrs. Grace made tremendous efforts in engaging parents and children in activities.

When I went to the parents and asked for their participation, they would do it. It was just this certain person that they didn't want to have anything to do with. We had a cookout out here and . . . I let them know that I was over this because I had promised the kids that were in the tutorial program that I would do this. The parents really helped out.

It appears that the level of community activity has dwindled. The distrust and hard feelings on the part of some residents still persists.

We know things are on the down side now, but when it first started you could see good community action. Parents showed concern about each others children . . . For a while we had group things. (Interview 2/18/93)

Dissension has eroded the sense of well-being among the adults.

A handful here and there. Some would tell on others, etc. Stuff leaked out and it was a big mess. At first when it started, everyone was participating with the Community Watch. Then it got bad because of drugs, etc. People from the outside were coming in and messing things up. They were threatening the people, and they [residents] got scared. They threatened to kill them; they were doing things to their cars and all those things. I even got scared for a while. I thought about my kids and said I wasn't going to have anyone shooting in my house. Ms. Proctor and other people had their cars damaged. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Efforts on the part of parents like Mrs. Grace to benefit the children continues despite the problems which plague the community.

I got involved with the parents and talked to them about things we were going to do, places we were going to go, things we were going to do for the kids. I would go door to door passing out handbills to let them be aware of what was going on. I would talk to the parents. I would get involved with the kids in the community. We would talk if they had a problem or something, they would tell me; and I would try to help them get the matter solved. Also, with the parents, if they were having trouble out of a neighbor's child, they would come to me and tell me the situation; and I would go to the child and the parent to try to get that resolved. (Interview 5/18/93)

Mrs. Grace recounts her earlier experiences while a member of the community resident council.

Sometimes I would go walking around the complex. When fights would break out, I would break them up. I would sit down and talk to the kids and ask them what they wanted to do and to try to get their input. When I got that information from them I would take it to the council to see if we could do something. Some of the things they wanted to do we did do. It eventually went sour, and we didn't get to do a lot of the things the kids wanted to do. (Interview 5/18/93)

What is quite interesting is that evidences of the influence and concern for the young people are still apparent. There are those in the community continuing to meet the needs of this communities' young people.

Some of us still watch over the neighborhood. As a result of the "Night Watch," everybody would get out on the porch. The parents made a rule that the younger kids had to be in at a certain time unless a parent was outside with them, etc. We're doing pretty good on that. (Interview 5/18/93)

Mrs. Grace says that not all parents assume this responsibility for their children.

Many of the parents will just let the children roam because they feel that someone else in the community is going to watch that child and send them home. I have done this myself. I ask the child their name and their address and send them home. I have seen other parents do this also.

Mrs. Grace is not alone in this endeavor. She said there are other parents who do the same. "There are a few

parents. Overall, I would say about 20 or 25. A lot of people are out on their porches."

GEDC is actively engaged in providing programs for the community and its young people. "GEDC had someone who would come and talk to kids who were getting into trouble."

In response to the same question, Mrs. Yusef saw evidences of community support on behalf of the young people.

The parents would go in to give money to help buy what the kids needed for Girl Scouts. We all chipped in. If they wanted to have a little get together with cookies and ice cream, the parents all chipped in . . . I chipped in every time they wanted to have something. I would give Mable Grace the money, and they would buy what they needed. (Interview 5/26/93)

Last year Mrs. Grace had a community cookout for all the children that were involved in the program. . . . They had different activities for the children to encourage them to do their best. She asked for volunteers. She put in most of the money and asked the parents to give \$5 for each household regardless as to how many children they had. A lot of parents got involved with it. (Mrs. Wade) (Interview 3/2/93)

Changes in the Young People's Behavior

The behaviors identified through the interviews included both attendance, behavior, and grades.

School Administrative Perspective.

Attendance is not the problem. As a matter of fact, there have been some students from the Valley that have come to school that have not gone

home for weeks at a time because of problems at home or whatever. While they were away from home they did come to school. So we couldn't get them for running away because, what runaway comes to school? I think this fellow was gone for a couple of weeks at a time, but he came to school. Attendance is high, 95 percent and up. (Bratcher) (Interview 3/24/93)

Mr. Bratcher believes the environment of the school allows such a student to maintain school attendance while being considered a runaway and alienated from the home environment.

For some students school is the only sane place. It's the only place where they can see some sanity and consistency. They see the caring, which our school climate reflects. If our attendance record was low, we would realize that there was something wrong here at the school. What we try to do is make sure the school has the right climate.

He stressed that one gauge of school effectiveness is measured by attendance. "Students would not want to go to a place if they didn't feel welcome or feel that somebody is going to help them. I think that evaluates itself. You can look at attendance and tell if someone doesn't want to be here."

Program Director Perspective. Changes in student behavior was addressed by Mrs. McAllister.

The children, instead of hanging out on the basketball court, will at least come in and see what is going on. The feedback that we get from them has been more positive as far as what we are doing for them. So we are hoping that same kind of thing can be repeated with the parents. (Interview 3/2/93)

We have observed drastic changes in behavior for a number of the students. Some of them were very disruptive. . . Initially what we did was send them home . . . but in looking beyond that behavior we found that typically when they were disruptive, it was because they wanted the attention. We tried to match those children with volunteers more often, if we could.

Getting to know the reasons for poor behavior became a means of correcting it. One student sought attention constantly. In response to the teachers' request, a home visit revealed that the mother was deaf.

What the child needed more than anything was someone to listen to him. A lot of times it was just to get attention or be the center of attention. . . . The child didn't get a chance to communicate that much at home. He had a younger sibling, but that child was two or three; and their communication skills were not up to par. With the mother being deaf, the child just talked all the time at school and in the program.
(Interview 3/2/93)

Teacher Perspectives.

Traci Yusef was a student in my room last year, and she is the one that stands out in my mind that was affected greatly by this program. (Diggs)
(Interview 2/3/93)

Mrs. Diggs renders the following account concerning

Traci:

At the beginning of the year when Traci came to me in the sixth grade, she had a negative attitude. As the year progressed, you could see her changing. She was so positive. In other words, she was in control of herself. If something happened to her or someone bothered her, she would look at it in a way so that she would not have to be reprimanded. She knew how to take notes, she had learned how to take notes. Anytime I

would lecture or just explain something, she would always write it down. If I showed a video or film, you didn't have to tell Traci to take notes. She would just start organizing her thoughts. So whoever was helping her at the center, it really carried over into the classroom; and she would talk about it sometimes.

Traci was one of the students active in helping other children at the center. Mrs. Diggs observed the same type activity in the classroom: "She developed a lot of pride because she also was helping someone at the center. I guess it was something like a peer program . . . and that was repeated in my classroom."

Kristin exemplified a similar characteristic as did Traci.

Kristin does that now, but not as intense as Traci. Kristin is concerned. Just this morning she was concerned that one child had missed so many answers on an assignment that was given last night that she just wanted to help her right then. I had to stop her and tell her to wait, we are doing this right now. I told her to just wait a while, and she could get back to that. I feel like this is a result of the program. She likes to help.

Improvement in behavior was also noted.

As far as behavior, I have found with these children that you don't have the discipline problems that have existed before . . . They have pride; When they come into the classroom, they feel good knowing that they have their work ready and they don't have to sit there and be ashamed for not having it. That boosts their self-esteem. (Diggs) (Interview 2/3/93)

Program Personnel. Changes in the behavior of children were intended outcomes of this program. Sharon and Harold verified that such changes did occur.

Yes there are changes, for instance Keith Mays. He's been coming. He's more interested in his homework and shows more excitement in wanting to learn. He enjoys reading and he likes being read to. (Sharon) (Interview 10/8/92)

We also have a little girl whose name is Jasmine. She loves to read and do her homework. We get children who get excited, and we try to make things as pleasant and fun while they're learning. So when they go to school, they have reason to go; and they can say "Hey I did this by myself at the center." (Harold) (Interview 10/8/92)

Improvement in school work changes their attitudes. Their whole outlook changes. They choose this instead of wanting to go outside and play so much. Success in school makes this change. They want to do their homework first and then do the other things. It enhances their ability to really perform. It really changes them. (Sharon) (Interview 2/10/93)

Even their parents have good self-esteem . . . They develop good self-esteem. At one time they didn't have any self-esteem or if they did it was very low. I'm proud of those students. (Harold)

Tonia is doing better. She has a better outlook and is now getting B's. Harry is doing well. He is in kindergarten . . . So many of them have a whole new outlook because they are getting their work done and they are very positive in tackling their homework. They know they can do it and feel good about it and not have to sit there and be frustrated. It's the frustration that makes them act out. (Harold) (Interview 4/29/93)

Tonia is very studious and loves to do her work and then play. But she gets her work done. She

is very smart. I admire her because of the obstacles and how she really has gotten over those to be successful as a student. She tries very hard and works very hard. I'm proud of her. (Sharon)(Interview 2/10/93)

Parent Perspectives. Mrs. Harris responded to changes in Ann's grades in a previous question. As a result of the program and her own involvement in the education of both Ann and Larry, she recognizes positive changes in her own children. Through her daily commitment to visit the center, she was in a position to note changes in some of the other children as well.

I have seen plenty children in the tutoring that really turned around (their report cards, progress reports, etc). I have to say, in my situation, I was having concerns with my daughter on her report card and progress reports, but she has brought up her grades. It makes a parent feel good to see that their child is bringing up their grades. . .

Larry is real good in school. I never had problems with him in school. The teacher has good progress reports on him at all times. That makes me feel good. . . .

Mary has done good on progress reports and her report cards. She was very proud. I believe they had her reports laminated, and she was very happy. (Mrs. Harris) (Interview 5/17/93)

Expanding Horizons has an awards day twice a year. These programs give students an opportunity to receive tangible evidence as a reward for the extra effort they have expended. It is also a time when parents share and celebrate, along with the community, the accomplishments of the children. Mrs. Grace remarked, "The last awards day was

in December prior to Christmas with Silverbriar and Westview Valley. They gave all the kids little rewards and prizes. Parents who came with the kids to help were also given rewards. It was just very nice. The children behaved well."

When school is out, Mrs. Grace provides a summer program for the kids. That is positive for them so they won't be out here wanting to fight all summer. I have seen some changes in some of the children that have been going to the program.
(Mrs. Wade) (Interview 3/2/93)

Mrs. Wade cited some examples. "I know of one; now he is very mild. He didn't have any kind of respect for a grown person or otherwise, but his whole attitude has changed a lot since he has been going."

Mrs. Yusef stated concerning Lisa, "Lisa is kind of slow." In addition to the tutorial program, Lisa's teacher works with her a couple of days after school. Her mother is pleased with the progress that has been made.

When she was down at the program, they saw a change in her. I would tell them to stay on her, and her grades pulled up. Lisa was the type that wanted to do when she wanted to do it. Her grades improved because they were on her more. Since she has been going she feels like she can do it. Her behavior has changed too. She used to be like a tomboy and didn't want to do anything. I think her attitude has changed. She has the best teacher down there and I hope she continues down there teaching the kids. (Interview 5/26/93)

All changes may not be permanent. There are many dynamics in the lives of children. Sometimes a positive change is

noted; then they revert to their previous behavior.

Mary was having behavior problems in school with her attitude and conduct. I don't know too much about her grades. I don't know if she wouldn't listen to the teachers or what. I think she was a C average student. She started listening and behaving real well, but all of a sudden her attitude and conduct changed towards her elders. It got worse. She lashed out at me one day, and I didn't understand it. I told her that she was not the same little girl that I knew. I believe it was all for attention. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Mrs. Smith remarked that one change she has observed in her daughter is the loss of some her timidity. Her teacher also made note of this change.

As far as Ginger's teacher is concerned, she thinks that since Ginger has been involved in the program that she is more outspoken in class and is willing to speak up and do more things like extra credit. I think that makes her teacher more excited about her going to the program . . . That gets Ginger and the teacher more involved. (Mrs. Smith) (Interview 4/29/93)

Mrs. Smith mentioned another positive aspect of the program.

The best thing is that children used to get straight off the bus and go outside to play, but now they go straight around the corner, do their homework, take their books home, and then it is playtime. Homework should be first. Now there is a program where you can go do your homework, and after you finish it is time for playing. I think they really grasp the concept of that. (Mrs. Smith) (Interview 4/29/93)

Mrs. Parker is the foster parent to Tonia and her brother. The interview on 6/8/93 revealed so much concerning

Tonia's life prior to coming to Guilford Middle School.

Tonia moved this year to Guilford Middle School. She refers to Mrs. Parker as "Grandma." She describes Tonia when they first met:

Toni came to my home June 26, 1992. She was in foster care, and they had just been taken away from their mother . . . I saw a young frightened girl get out of the car. I saw sadness. I saw deep depression. I saw a young lady that didn't know if she was going or coming. I even saw a young lady that didn't understand why she was where she was at this particular time.

Tonia was a product of her environment.

She had a pretty rugged background with fighting in school and getting involved with other kids that were trouble. By coming out of the "projects" and under the environment that she was living in, her name tag had B-A-D on it. She was very hateful, sassy, smart mouthed; and it seemed like trouble was her line at the time. She had experienced so much and been through a lot, and I knew that was a job that the Lord and I had to work on because that was too heavy of a job for me.

Tonia resorted to the same behaviors to which she was accustomed and found herself again in trouble at school. "When I [Mrs. Parker] sat down and talked with Mr. Bratcher, I said everybody deserved a chance and this is the only lifestyle that she knew." Mrs. Parker and her husband allowed Tonia to vent her frustrations and anger, but they continued to relate to her that she had tremendous potential.

Where she was low, we worked in that area. We let her know that she was somebody regardless of where she came from, [or] what she had gone through, and what her mom did, that she was still somebody, she was her own person. She got a chance here in this community and in this school. She could be just as smart of a young woman as the richest girl there. Regardless of a mother or father, she could go just as far as anyone.

Tonia was given a warning about her behavior at school. Mrs. Parker said "it was a threat that if she didn't straighten up that she would have to leave that school because of her background from her previous school."

With the help of those that really cared, Sharon, Mr. Christian, Mr. Bratcher, my husband and myself, and most of all God, we saw a turn around coming, and we still see that turn around. We see now that there is no stopping her as long as she stays here where she is at. We along with Mr. Bratcher at the school decided to give her another chance. I began to see a change in the kids. Toni started getting involved with tutoring in the areas where she needed some pick up in. She started with Sharon . . . She found favor in Mrs. Entzminger. She saw a connection there because Sharon showed love, concern, and sympathy, all that Toni was needing at that time. I saw a young woman's grade come up from Cs to Bs and As. I even saw a young woman, if it weren't for her mouth today, could make the honor roll because all of her grades are up.

These changes did not occur quickly. Much effort and time was involved in the changes now observed in Tonia.

Through it all, I knew that during the time of counseling, prayer . . . letting her just sit down with just my husband and I. She would sometimes talk to us together, and sometimes she would talk to us one on one. She had so much hurt stored up in her heart until we just let her talk about anything, anytime. We have cried with her. We

have smiled with her. We have come to love her, and we have also told her that all that had happened is now water under the bridge; and she can go past that now.

Student Perspectives.

It is very educational. Before I started going down there, my grades were down, and I had to get someone to help me. I got Ms. Entzminger to help me with my math . . . My grades went from Ds to Bs and As to honor roll. (Traci) (Interview 5/18/93)

Traci remarked on what she perceived as having made the difference: "She (Sharon) was telling me that I could learn." Other children she noted had also improved. "Their grades are better. They act differently in school. They are now pushing to learn." The reason given for not only her improvement but also the improvement she observed for others was because of the tutors. "They pushed us to learn, they taught us new ways to learn, new skills, and techniques." Along with these changes, Traci says they have "positive attitudes" concerning their work and their own abilities. "Their attitudes are more positive where they used to be very negative." The summer program offers young people an alternative, says Traci: "It keeps a lot of kids out of trouble during the summer."

Kristin believes an attribute of the program is that children have changed attitudes. Her attitude about the quality of her work changed. "I would just make Cs." "If you don't believe you can do the work because it is too hard or something, then the tutors help you develop trust in

yourself [so] that you can do it and understand it better. Then you can do it by yourself." It appears that the encouragement dispensed by the program personnel renders the students capable of successfully completing their work.

It has helped me. If I didn't want to do my work or something, then the tutor encouraged me to do my work so I could make myself look good instead of not doing my work and making myself look bad. I am positive about myself. (Interview 3/2/93)

Kristin is proud of her accomplishments through the program.

I feel better, and now I am doing much better in my work. At least I am trying to do better in my work because of the program. Before I went into the program my grades were going a little downhill, they were all almost to a Cs. Now that I have started going to the program my grades started rising up to Bs and As. (Interview 3/2/93)

Her third nine weeks grades are good indicators of this. "I made four Bs and two As." Kristin appears to be proud of the accomplishments of another student in the program.

It was this one girl [Ann Harris], she was making Ds on her report card because she wasn't coming to the program, and she was thinking negative about herself. When she came to the program, her grades started rising to Bs, Cs, and As.

Tonia relates how she was introduced to Expanding Horizons:

Mr. Bratcher was looking over my files and came to me one day in the hall and asked me if I would like to start tutoring and I said yes. He said to tell my grandma to take me down to Westview Valley, and she did . . . Mr. Bratcher told me that I needed to get on the ball and start doing my work. In the event that I needed to talk to

him, I could, and if I didn't understand my work, he would help me . . . He pushed me too, and I met Sharon through him. He asked if I'd like to go to tutoring out here, and I said yes. Then he told me about the tutoring down there and that is how I met Sharon. (Interview 6/8/93)

Tonia gives the following account of the changes wrought in her by Expanding Horizons and Guilford Middle School.

Before I went to the program, when I was living in the city and I was staying with my friends and everything, I was making real bad grades because I wouldn't do my homework in the sixth grade. My grades were really bad, but when I met Sharon and got in the program, I started bringing my grades up. I felt that if I didn't do my work, I would still be in the same grade. They told me I was not going to pass the sixth grade because I had bad grades. I had Ds and Cs, but when Sharon started working with me, I brought my grades up. It wasn't that I didn't know the work, I just didn't want to do the work because there wasn't anyone there to push me to do it. Sharon really helped me get on the ball with my work because she told me that I was going to need it later in life.

Tonia notes the same improvement for her brother:

My brother was the same way. He had bad grades too. Sharon helped him bring his grades up. I didn't really care if I did my homework or not, but she talked to us and told us that we needed to start doing our homework, and so we did. At Guilford Middle School they help us a lot with our work.

Tonia says there is a difference in her experience at her present and former school: "In the city schools, they just give you the work and let you just do it yourself. They don't really help you. In the county schools, they help you

more; and Sharon explains it to us where we can understand it." The proof of the effectiveness of the school and the tutorial program may be discerned in her grades. "I made the honor roll two times." Tonia has strong support from Mrs. Parker. She recounts that her mother would tell them to do their homework, but wouldn't check to see if it was done. It generally didn't get done. "Our mother isn't very educated, and we couldn't get much help." Tonia made the mistake of failing to complete an assignment. Mrs. Parker unlike her mom refused to give her a choice in the matter. Mrs. Parker relates this incidence:

Sometimes when she has homework, she will finish the work for certain teachers but not others. One night about three weeks ago I received a call from her science teacher saying that Toni did not finish her homework. I went upstairs about quarter to ten and asked her if she had finished her work. She said "no grandma, I got tired." I said "Oh no, this work has got to be turned in the morning or you will make a failing grade. Get up right now and come downstairs. You are going to get this homework finished tonight." I had to sign and date it to let the teacher know that I was aware of it. Believe me, before twelve that homework was finished. When she came home the next day, she had a B+. (Interview 6/8/93)

Tonia makes an interesting study. There were a number of changes made this year: in her home, her school, and her involvement in Expanding Horizons. Some or all of these situations created new possibilities for a young women who was headed for trouble.

Adria is the granddaughter of Mrs. Parker and is also enrolled in the tutorial program.

Adria is doing well. Lately she hasn't been doing her work and would tell my grandma that she didn't have any homework. Lately grandma has been checking her book-bag, and she has been doing her work. Every week they send home a weekly report, and she has been doing good. She got straight smiling faces and As and Bs on some of her work. (Tonia) (Interview 6/8/93)

Tonia is aware of the power of peer pressure as a contributing factor to her earlier poor achievement prior to her enrollment at Guilford Middle School. She is an advocate of the effectiveness of the Guilford Middle and the tutorial program in making the difference for her.

In the city when you are around all of your friends, they say, "I know you ain't going to do that." They didn't want me to do my work. One of my friends moved to Guilford Middle, and said she thinks she will be doing better out here Most of it is just peer pressure We were talking, and I said I was glad that I did move out here because I am doing better. She said she hopes this will help her to do better. I told her they would because there are some nice teachers out here. (Interview 6/8/93)

Tonia says her best advice came from her grandma: "She tells us not to think about the past. Don't look back on the past, but only think about your future."

Academic and Behavior Profiles of Selected Students

Student grades and teacher comments, which were derived from school and program documents and records, were made available to the researcher. These data represent a summary

of the information from these sources. Inasmuch as, grades are representative of the year prior to the study of Expanding Horizons (1991-1992) and the period (1992-1993) during which the program was evaluated. The student GPA's were computed for each student from the year end averages and appear in Table 2.

Ann Harris

	<u>1991-1992</u>	<u>-1993</u>
Reading	C D C-C- C	B B B
Math	B D D D C	D D D C D
Spelling	A A A B A	C B B A B
English	D B C B C	C-C C B-C
Soc. St.	D C D C D	B C C B C
Science	F C D B C	C C C B C

Teacher comments from Ann's report card during the year 1991-1992, were: "Ann needs to focus on work and complete homework; assignments need to be turned in on time and more effort is needed." The comments which follow were gleaned from the student's report card the following year. An additional source of student information was the questionnaire from GEDC which was disseminated to the teachers of students enrolled in Expanding Horizons. These comments are indicative of budding positive change. "Ann has started to work harder--Please help her study her multiplication tables." "She has improved in handing in homework and class work." "Ann is trying harder in class and has been a good helper."

The following excerpt appears on the GEDC questionnaire: "Ann has always been prepared for class and

she was very interested in doing her very best all the times," replied her teacher. Additionally, the teacher responded "I strongly agree that Ann's behavior has improved this year due to the tutorial program," and that "I strongly believe it would be helpful for this student to continue in Expanding Horizons."

Shannon Grace

Reading	C	C	C	B	C	B	B	B	C	B
Math	B	C	B	C	C	C	B	B	C	C
Spelling	A	B	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	B
English	B	C	C	B	C	B	B	B	B	B
Soc. St.	B	B	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

"Work on controlling talking" appeared on Shannon's report card during the first nine weeks (1991-1992). During the second grading period a change was noted by her teacher- "I am proud of Shannon for the improvement she has made during this report period." During the next year similar comments were made: "A problem of talking in class," "Conference requested," "Proud of improvements. Good work." Most comments were indicative of improvement.

Traci Yusef

Lang. arts	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Reading	B	C	B	B	B	C	B	B	C	C	
Pre-algebra	C	C	C	C	C	Algebra	A	B	B	B	B
S. S.	A	B	C	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
Science	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	
P.E.	D	A	C	B	C	A	B	B	B	B	

Traci was previously described by Mrs. Diggs as having changed drastically due to her involvement in Expanding

Horizons. The researcher observed her eagerness in helping other children during the tutorial. Mrs. Diggs, her teacher, suggested that these changes occurred as Traci's confidence and self-esteem were enhanced because of her use of newly acquired skills from this program. Mrs. Yusef expressed pride in her daughter's academic success during the interview with the researcher.

Tonia Smith

Cultural Wheel	A	B				Home economics.	B	A
						Art	B	B
Lang Arts	D	F	D	D	D		C	B B C C
Reading	F	F	D	D	D		A	A B B B
Math	C	D	D	C	D		B	B B C B
Soc. St.	F	F	C	C	C		D	C B B C
Science	F	F	F	C	D		B	B B C B
P.E./Health	C	C	C	C	C		C	B B B B

Involved in multiple school infractions soon after enrolling at Guilford Middle School, Tonia became engaged in confrontations her teachers and with other students. Fights and other aggressive behaviors resulted in suspensions. School records confirm a one day in-school suspension for fighting (10/16/92). On 11/2/92 she received a 3 day in-school suspension again for fighting. An additional in-school suspension resulted from aggressive behavior/conflict with a teacher on 2/2/93. The teacher questionnaire from GEDC, regarded Tonia as a discipline problem and she was described as "aggressive, and abusive toward peers; she used loud and boisterous language to teachers; and was unable to

accept correction in the positive way it was intended."

Mr. Bratcher intervened on behalf of Tonia and referred her to Expanding Horizons. Special help from the personnel at Expanding Horizons, created positive changes in her grades, and she began to exert control over her aggressive behaviors as evidenced through her self-report data.

Mrs. Parker (foster parent) and Mrs. Entzminger (lead tutor) have alluded to improvements wrought in her due in part to her affiliation with Expanding Horizons. Tonia regards her involvement in Expanding Horizons, the encouragement received from Sharon, the strict discipline of Mrs. Parker, and a change of environment as having made a difference for her.

Kristin Wade

Reading	C	B	C	B	C	A	A	A
Math	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	B
Spelling	A	A	A	B	A	B	B	B
English	C	B	A	B	B	A	A	A
Soc. St.	C	C	A	A	B	B	A	B
Science	A	A	B	A	B	B	B	B
P.E								

Kristin, a very talented student, manifested no behavior problems. She currently receives instruction for the academically gifted.

Ginger Smith

Reading	B	A	B	B	B	Communication	B	B	B	A	B
Spelling	A	A	A	C	B						
Math	A	A	A	C	B	Math	B	B	B	A	A
Science	B	A	A	A	A	Science	B	F	A	A	B
Soc. St.	A	A	A	B	A		B	C	B	B	B
						Health	A	-	B	B	B

While the 1991-1992 grade reports indicated that Ginger was working at grade level, she was capable of working above grade level. During the following year her report card yielded such comments as: "Ginger is a hard worker, eager and enthusiastic." The teacher's comment to her mother, Mrs. Smith, stated that "Ginger has made a complete turn around. Thanks for your help." This comment was in response to an "F" in science that resulted from her failure to turn in a research paper rather than her ability to develop a research paper. The parental involvement strategies of Expanding Horizons appeared to have had an impact on the level of her performance. Ginger was tested and qualified for the Academically Gifted (AG) program during the year.

Lisa Yusef

Reading	M N N N	F F F C-
Spelling	N N M S	F F F F
Math	M M M M	B C D B
Science	S S S S	F F C F
Soc. St.	S S S S	F F F F

(M) most of the time, (S) sometimes

Summer school grades

Reading	B
Math	B
Science	A
Soc St.	B

Lisa was working below grade level and attended summer school. Her grades during summer school revealed marked improvement over those during the regular school year. "Lisa needs work on study habits and think carefully about

what she is doing, and put a lot more effort into listening and completing her work." Lisa experienced much difficulty in school though she was receiving remediation both at Guilford Middle School and in Expanding Horizons. No GPA is cited for Lisa. Although summer school was not a facet of Expanding Horizons, Lisa's performance indicates her ability to perform and possibly the utilization of the strategies of Expanding Horizons during summer school.

TABLE 2

<u>GPA's</u>	<u>1991-1992</u>	<u>1992-1993</u>
Ann Harris	2.17	2.17
Shannon Grace	2.20	2.60
Traci Yusef	2.67	2.83
Tonia Smith	1.38	2.71
Kristin Wade	3.17	3.33
Ginger Smith	3.33	3.30

Interviews, school and program records, and documents revealed that positive academic and behavioral changes in the lives of the selected students occurred. These changes represent the consolidated efforts of Guilford Middle School, GEDC, the Expanding Horizons Program, increased parental involvement, and changes in the community provided a more conducive and supportive climate for learning. The GPA's from Table 2 largely verify academic improvement.

Changes in Parent Attitudes

School Administrative Perspectives. The ultimate goal of Expanding Horizons was dispelling myths about the poor and providing the opportunities that would in fact prepare them to help themselves. The program was to be monitored by the community. It was the intent, says Mr. Bracther, for the program to be "self-sustained" as a measure of the empowerment of the community.

We've empowered the community to feel comfortable with seeking any and every resource that is available on their own. I think that is good for the community and the community's self-esteem because living in subsidized housing oftentimes carries with it a stereotype: you're poor, you don't care about yourself, you don't care about your children, you're not very moral . . . All the typical stereotypes of single, black female heads of household for the most part are not true. I found that members in the community are concerned about their children. They want to help their children; however, sometimes they don't know how. They have a desire to better themselves, not only for themselves, but for their children and families. Some are very caring individuals. Some are very intelligent individuals; sometimes maybe not in a formal educational sense, but very smart individuals . . . I'd like for this community and everybody else know that this is the situation here. (Interview 1/28/93)

The desires of this community are consistent with those of other communities. "They wish to be successful just like everybody else. I see in some small way, perhaps, that we help with that."

They have made a difference. The parents made a difference. Then the children wanted to make a difference at the same time. As far as we are concerned, they actually made the difference by becoming a community themselves and working together with each other. I think that is where the difference was made. That was the goal at the outset. (Interview 1/28/93)

Mrs. Murrill sees that their role was to "make them aware of organizations and whenever possible to tap any resources we might know of that could affect the community in a positive manner."

We have someone on staff who has a relationship with the Greensboro Jaycees. So we've gotten funds from them to purchase a TV-VCR combination . . . We were able to get some money from the Greensboro Jaycees again, and we were able to purchase four picnic tables and to place them at the site. (Murrill) (Interview 3/24/93)

They have seen us in the community. We've come and sat down with them, listened to them. So they feel more comfortable now. In the past when they had seen me before "Expanding Horizons," sometimes it was to bring students home who have been suspended from school. Now when they see one of us in the community, they don't think it is something negative all of the time. (Bratcher)

Guilford Middle School was aware that educational needs were not the only needs of the community. Often more pressing needs existed. They endeavored to supply some of those needs through food and toy drives.

During Christmas, Mrs. Murrill and her group gathered food. The day before we got out of school, we delivered cans of food stuff, as it were, to the community. I didn't know exactly who to deliver it to or who was in need; so we had to

do some pre-work. I called Mrs. Proctor and asked her to get me some names and addresses of people who were not doing well at the time or maybe in need of not only food but toys also . . . We provided enough toys for 27 children. It is more than academics. It's getting involved in the community and having them involved in the school in any shape, form, or fashion. (Interview 3/24/93)

Program Director Perspectives. Mrs. McAllister is aware of changes in attitude: "The parents feel a bit more comfortable communicating with us."

Initially when we first started developing the relationship with the community, we would have resident council meetings where the parents would come in and you would give them all of this information. They would just sit there. You didn't know if they didn't understand or if they didn't care or what. Now the parents drop in more. They ask more questions, and you can tell that they have become active in the community and the school. This is a positive change.

Many times in talking with parents, I have found they didn't have good experiences in school themselves. So we feel like if we can arm them with the tools to actually help them, then they will feel more comfortable with coming and with helping out. I think a lot of those that want to help out once they get there they feel intimidated by some of the work. We just feel that if we can train them . . . then they will feel more comfortable about coming out. (Interview 3/2/93)

Program Personnel Perspectives.

One nice surprise was the attendance of parents at the awards program. They are so happy when their children are receiving something that is very productive. The parent are proud that the children instead of being outside getting in trouble they are inside and learning something . . . We have some very bright youngsters out here.

Not all the kids out here sit around and play. Many of our kids really do study. All they need is some encouragement and some reinforcement and discipline. (Sharon) (Interview 2/10/93)

Parents were often so appreciative of the efforts on behalf of their children that they sought ways to help out.

When the parents see the children performing well, then they're happy. They would donate snacks and send little thank you notes. Normally we try to inform parents as to how their child is doing at the center. Many times the parents are very excited when the children are producing because of the center, and they donate materials and snacks because they are proud. (Harold) (Interview 10/8/92)

Sharon admits that even the program cannot compensate for or compete with some of the influences in the community. Some children must endure both physical and emotional abuse, live with drug addiction and prostitution in the home. Her response to changes in attitudes is tempered by these circumstances:

I hate to say it, but attitudes have not changed as much as we would like. The children have developed increased self-esteem, but as long as you have the activities that are going here, the abuse, the drugs and alcohol . . . child abuse and children being exposed to it more than they should be in this area, you always have a conflict. This community program helps to point the child in the right direction. We hope they will see that they don't necessarily have to become a part of this. This program attempts to give the children a new outlook. You don't have to live like that; you can do better. (Interview 2/10/93)

If positive changes in attitudes are wrought only in the children, then this is a tremendous outcome. The children may be rendered capable of escaping these situations, and the mind sets and the sense of helplessness that is observed among so many of their peers and adults living under low socioeconomic conditions.

Parental Perspectives. Mrs. Yusef says her attitude has changed drastically because of the program. She has a positive relationship with the school, and that was not always the case. She is involved in the school more and feels comfortable talking to the principal and the teachers of her children.

At one time I wouldn't go to the PTA meetings because I didn't see any need and because I didn't feel comfortable. I didn't know what they were talking about, and I wasn't interested. Then they started having the meetings down there . . . Then I learned some things at the meetings . . . I would just go to the school and listen anyhow. She [Sharon] had told me many times to go to the school and listen, and I told her it wasn't worth it. Not to me it wasn't because I wasn't thinking about what they were talking about. I did find out that when you go to a PTA meeting they are talking about kids. So I took her advice and went to the school. (Interview 5/26/93)

Mrs. Wade is concerned that not enough parents have been involved to have had a change in attitude: "Some parents care and some don't." She is cognizant of those who participate in the tutorial and as chaperons and those who give support from home. Her concern is of those parents

having made no effort in any endeavor relating to the program and their children.

The ones that are involved in the tutoring program, they care. They get involved, and some serve as chaperons when we go on field trips, or they just go and check in and see how their kids are doing and how they are behaving. (Interview 3/2/93)

She speculated that the percentage who are engaged in some capacity is quite minimal, "very low, like five percent."

Student Perspectives. The support of parents is most essential to help prompt and encourage students to become the best they can be. The results of the effectiveness of the program and the success of the children is a driving impetus for parents to keep them in the program. Parents likewise must see to their child's completion of assignments at home.

My mother likes the program because it helps me with my grades because my grades are going higher. . . . Most parents like it because it helps their children in their schoolwork. (Kristin) (Interview 3/2/93)

Grandma doesn't give us choices like either you do your homework or you don't get this, or do your homework or you don't get that. She just says do your homework; no choices. If we were with our mom, we would have choices. Our mommy is okay, but she is not very educated. In a way she cares, and in a way she doesn't. She cares that we make it in life that we don't be like her, but she doesn't say do your homework. . . Ms. Parker is not our real grandma. She is our foster parent. So we are in foster care, but we have been living with her for so long that we just started calling

her grandma. She is like a grandma because she takes her extra money and spends it on us. (Tonia) (Interview 6/8/93)

Changes in Community Attitudes

School Administrative Perspective. Mr. Bratcher cites another positive outcome of school-community relationships.

I mentioned earlier that sometimes when the parents visit it is for negative reasons. There was one instance where a parent had come in because she felt her child was treated unfairly. Instead of letting that just fester out in the community, at least she came in and made her feelings known. (Bratcher) (Interview 10/6/92)

Program Director Perspectives. Mrs. McAllister attests to positive attitudinal changes that ensued from the program and community interaction.

As far as the changes in the attitudes of the community, I feel that we have developed a positive relationship with people in the community. I also think that some of the college students have found it to be positive, practical experience. (Interview 3/2/93)

Community Council Perspective. Low-income subsidized housing residents are generally regarded as having little concern for their children's education. What is most apt to be true is that they feel a degree of incompetence in meeting the educational needs of their children. Many of these parents view themselves as powerless to dictate change in their immediate environment. Reverend Nelson Johnson in an article in Greensboro News and Record (1993) stated:

Poverty can deprive people of more than decent housing, food, jobs, health care and safety. It can crush self-esteem as well . . . Organization is an important first step in bringing unity among poor people We feel that will lead to poor people speaking more for themselves, instead of being spoken for and talked about and analyzed. And that's empowering in itself. (B-3)(Wednesday May 12, 1993)

This sense of powerlessness in their own lives must be overcome so that each adult in every community becomes an agent of change. Organization of community persons is an essential first step toward this goal. So it was that Westview Valley organized for the express purpose of reclaiming their community and selected Mrs. Sadie Proctor as President of the Resident Council. Mrs. Proctor describes their community as virtually powerless to help itself. It was not without difficulties to initiate the steps that led this community in becoming empowered. Mrs. Proctor renders an account of the steps taken by the council in organizing and empowering the residents of Westview Valley:

The property manager and her boss approached us about probably starting a resident council. I had asked several times if we could have one out here, and at different points, whoever was the manager down here at the office at that time, would say well we don't really need anything like that. This was the first time that they came to us and asked us to organize, to form, because they felt that it would be good for the community. (Interview 2/18/93)

Organization was essential to affect any changes. Once begun, the council sought active community participation in

addressing their concerns and desires for the community. Identifying the concerns of the community was discerned through a series of community meetings.

One of the things we were trying to accomplish in having a successful resident council was getting all of the residents, or the majority of them, to become involved with what was going on in the community for the express purpose of improving the community,[and] working with their children to improve their behavior because we had so many diverse problems.

Through the efforts of this organization consisting of only a core of the residents, they sought and made many positive changes in the community. The members of the council believed that parents needed help. A concerted effort by most of the community could help cut down on "vandalism and children being so disrespectful to the adults, because they would see that the community was working in their behalf also." When the community organized they found needed programs, services and funding available to them.

There was money available for certain programs all the time, and if you don't ask for them you don't get them. We had been overlooked in a lot of instances. There were things we could have gotten as a group and as a community, that we didn't get simply because we didn't know. We weren't organized, however, over the years, many people had worked independently to improve our community. (Interview 2/18/93)

Parental Perspectives.

I think that some of the parents who weren't as caring for their own are now more caring. In this community some or most look out for other peoples' kids, and they care about them. The parents are more involved with their own children, and they go check on them. (Mrs. Smith) (Interview 4/29/93)

The community would be lost if they didn't have the program because parents depend on the program to make their children more encouraged and to help them with their attitudes to make them be the best they can be. You go do your homework, and once you are done you can do other things. This helps parents encourage their children and lets them know you don't just hit the door, drop the books, and go out and play. It is a step process like with anything. When you go to your job, you do that first; and when you get home, it is time to do other things. I tell my daughter that homework is first. Everything else is second. (Mrs. Smith)

Mrs. Proctor and Mrs. Harris alluded that community cohesiveness is easily destroyed among the poor. A very fragile sense of trust exists among the poor. Distrust and dissension wreaked havoc and virtually destroyed the influence of the council and effectively began diminishing its empowerment. Expanding Horizons continues to work in regard to creating effective school/home/community relations.

Program Strengths and Outcomes

School Administrative perspectives. The most important strength of the program according to Mr. Brachter is its

utilization of available community resources and the availability of organizations reaching out to help those in need. Extending the educational opportunities outside of the community is also deemed as a valuable learning experience.

We received funds from the Jaycee's to purchase the TV and VCR. The Public Library was also involved. The librarian at the Guilford College Branch came to the center and issued library cards to students. I'm hoping that the students were made aware that the library is there and that they can get material . . . The important thing was getting enough resources available for them so they could properly do their homework and study. In the end this should bring up their grades. We also communicated with the librarian at the Guilford College Branch making sure that the resources that were needed were actually there in the library. It was important for these students to know that the library had a wide, vast store of materials there that would meet the needs of everybody in the community. (Interview 3/24/93)

Students at Guilford Primary are referred to Expanding Horizons when they experience difficulties most often by their teachers and Mr. Bratcher.

I will ask an elementary school teacher when she is communicating with me about a child or a student not doing something, "Where do they live?" Most of them are aware that if the child lives in the Valley or Silverbriar, the community center is there and that there is a resource to help the child. So what oftentimes happens is they will contact me or just ask the child, "Do you go to the resource center, or do you go to tutoring?"

The attendance of the student is followed up by a questionnaire requesting the needs of the child and how they

might cooperate in meeting the needs. When these steps are taken and success of the children is an outcome, so then is the change in attitude on the part of both the child and the parents.

One thing that we are doing, we know we have end-of-course testing, and we know that our tests are culturally based, and we have discovered that in order for students to really be successful, they must experience some things in life by seeing and touching and knowing. So, one thing that we are doing is sponsoring a trip offered to some of the middle school students from the community to Washington, D.C., to give them an educational tour. This is something we are trying to see if it will improve academics and make them feel it's interesting and make them more aware. We are doing this trip to build their self-esteem. It is not an incentive for them as much as the fact that we are trying to offer them an on-site education. We are targeting Washington, D.C., because we know a lot of history is there and it's based mainly on our fifth grade curriculum. They will be assigned to a big brother in a team with three boys, and they will work together the entire time in a group trying to build self-esteem. The Washington, D.C., trip was an important cultural experience. (Interview 3/24/93)

This on-site educational experience began for 25 boys ages 11-14 on April 17-18, 1993. Transportation was provided by the husband of Mrs. Murrill. For some of the boys, it was the first time on a bus other than the school bus. They stayed at the Springfield Best Western Motel. This was also a new experience for the majority of the students. Mr. Bratcher remarked that their behavior in public was excellent. A guided tour was on the agenda for Saturday. The walking tour on Sunday took them to the

Smithsonian, the Air and Space Museum, and the Museum of Natural History. Tremendous interest was paid to fossils. They were most excited with the exhibit of Black pilots and the Black fighter squadron. Mr. Murrill wants to keep this same group together for a summer trip to Atlanta and a fall trip to Disney World.

Each student wrote letters of thanks to Mr. Murrill and the teachers and organizations providing financial support to the trip. There seemed to be changes in the attitudes of some of the students, and they showed their appreciation. Mr. Bratcher said they were often commended by persons in restaurants on the behavior of such a large group of young men. Other adults complimented them for such an undertaking and expressed how pleased they were to see such efforts extended on behalf of the 25 Black males chaperoned by 5 adult Black males. It represented an endeavor rarely seen. A trip for the females is planned for New York City.

Program Director Perspectives. "As far as the outcomes and the strengths of the program," Mrs. McAllister said, "I think that role of GEDC is more of a catalyst for strengthening partnerships in the education of children. We serve as a bridge between this community and the larger community." GEDC serves as a coordinating agency and seeks ways to get poor parents involved in the education of their child (children). Parental involvement in Expanding Horizons the residents a greater sense of responsibility and

empowerment in meeting the academic needs of their child(ren).

We strengthen those partnerships. Because without the parental involvement and without the tutorial program, education will just not be important to the kids. Some are just waiting until they can get out. Without the support of the home, they are not going to come to the tutorial program on a consistent basis. (Interview 3/2/93)

Change is what Expanding Horizons is all about. "We feel that in order for the children to have the best possible chance in education and their overall well-being, then we have to have the involvement of the schools, the community, and the home." Mrs. McAllister, like Sharon, takes comfort in knowing that parental involvement may be occur only in the home. "There are parents who are actively involved at home who never visit the site. But verification of their support is that they are sending the children." This certainly seems to provide evidence as to a positive regard of the program.

Program Personnel Perspectives. "An important outcome is seeing the child [become] as productive as he can be." Verification of the program's strength is to be found "when they get their report cards [and] you see that big smile on their face [because] they've passed all their courses and their grade and have done exceptionally well," says Sharon. The program constantly encourages and pushes them along.

We take pride in the outcome when we know our encouragement and reinforcement pays off in those like Kevin, Cherika, Kristin, and Tonia, Travis, and Herbert, who are now doing well. Once they realized this was for real, [they're] going to sit down, study. You're going to do your work. Then they come back with a good report card. The smile and big hug lets me know the outcome was worth the effort. The constant saying "you've got to do it, I know you can do it this" is an important part of the program. (Interview with Sharon 2/10/93)

Parental Perspectives

The kids have gained more confidence. They have someone to give them that pat on the back when they do good and show they are proud of them and praise them. They did things with them and made them feel like they were cared about. That is what made the kids do better and brought up their grades. (Mrs. Harris) (Interview 5/17/93)

With my child Shannon, who is ten, she couldn't relate to me with her homework. I would get tense. I am the type of person that if I tell you to do something, I want you to do it. She would get nervous; and when this program started, I let her go down there. She was able to receive what they were saying better from them. Her grades at first were low because she was having problems, but when she started going down there, her grades came up. I guess that was because somebody else was helping her. Because I would yell and that just made her more nervous. When she got down there and they were helping her, her grades went up. (Mrs. Grace) (Interview 5/18/93)

Sharon takes time with the kids. She has a lot of patience. That is something I didn't have. She is nice and knows how to act with the kids. She treats them like her own. I told her she can treat Lisa just like she is her child. She said "I don't want to hit her like I hit mine," but Lisa minds her. (Mrs. Yusef) (Interview 5/26/93)

I began to notice later in the spring that Traci, as well as some of the older children, was no longer in attendance at the center. Her mother made me aware of another strength of the program. Giving them the confidence to move away from program is a strength. This new-found confidence exudes from Traci. "Traci doesn't go anymore, but she has gotten to the point where she can manage by herself. Lisa still needs to go down there."

Mrs. Smith said:

I can't really say I've seen any weaknesses. Everything I see is encouraging. Harold, for instance, gets involved with the children; and you can see the excitement he has for the children and how much they like him, and how much he tries to encourage the children to do their best. I can't really say I've seen any weaknesses. (Interview 4/29/93)

Mrs. Smith considers the summer program to be a strength: "The program is not just in operation during the school year. It is in operation during the summer too."

Mrs. Parker was very concerned about her grandson Wade.

When he started with the tutoring, he was very low in his reading and understanding of numbers. He liked to play a lot too and wouldn't keep his mind on what he was doing. . . . Harold starting taking up a lot of time with him, and his reading and numbers have become more appropriate. Wade can even tell time now. Before he couldn't even tell time. He . . . can tell you what time it is . . . So at Christmas we brought a clock and put it in his room. Now Wade knows when it is time to turn the TV off at night to go to bed. When the alarm goes off in the morning, it's time to get up, it's 6:00. Wade knows when it is time for snack in the evening at 7:00, and at 6:00 he knows

that it is dinnertime . . . He has progressed from being in tutoring. (Interview 6/8/93)

Mrs. Parker is quite proud of the what the children have accomplished in the program.

My children know that they can function better in their reading, writing, mathematics . . . They know that all it takes is more striving, and then you can accomplish and do it. Instead of saying I can't do it, I don't understand; but they know now that if they just continue to study and ask questions and look for help, that it is easy, and they can accomplish and learn more and make better grades.

Mrs. Parker is also pleased about the reading improvement she has observed with Wade (first grade).

He loves reading. Even though he is weak, it is his best subject now because he is seeing improvement. He takes any book and opens it, even the Bible. He wants you to read something, "What is this?", he'll say.

She was also very concerned about Travis who is the brother of Tonia.

Trevor (the brother of Tonia) had problems and difficulty in reading, spelling, pronouncing words. When he came, he was in the sixth grade but in the third grade reading level. We were trying to figure ourselves how did he get to the sixth grade. Travis didn't even know how to spell his aunt's name. Her name is Ella. He couldn't even spell that. Now we are seeing that Travis is at a fifth grade reading level. . . and he got involved with a science project. At first he would say he couldn't do it. They would give him a science project about bringing a report in about an astronaut. Make something that astronauts use, even if it is just the helmet, etc. He would say I can't, or I don't know where to start, etc. Now

Travis can get involved with something and knows where to start.

Adria is Mrs. Parker's granddaughter.

She is coming up now in her mathematics where she was very low . . . and for her to be a third grader we could see how she might not get promoted. This tutoring has helped her bring her mathematics skills up. (Interview 6/8/93)

Student Perspectives. The student responses were generally quite terse, but it was evident they enjoyed the experiences the program had to offer. "They help you do your work and making good grades," said Ann Harris, also confirming what her mother had previously stated. Ann was concerned about not having enough tutors and volunteers at the center: "One of the things that I think would be better is having enough tutors to help you do your homework." The program was not just work; it afforded them time for fun. Sharon's twins gave their sentiments: "We go outside and have fun playing and they help us learn." They beamed with pride as they told me they were both on the honor roll "sometimes."

When Ann was asked if she had made the honor roll, she responded: "No not quite, but I am working on it." She expressed what she saw as a negative aspect of the program, "People's bad attitudes and talking back to Harold like Maruka."

Ginger says, "It is just fun to be down there."

Kristin thinks the volunteers were a strength of the program: "Every once in a while some college students come because they are studying about classrooms or about being a teacher. They mostly come from UNCG." The awards program represented a special attribute of the program. "We had an awards ceremony where we sang some songs, and they gave away certificates." She mentioned also a cultural trip taken by the children. "We went to the African American Heritage Center downtown, and they taught us many different things about our history." Kristin repeatedly mentions the encouragement received:

They help you a lot with your work. When they were young, they told us, they did their work; and they try to encourage young folks like us to do our work to make a better future. (Kristin)

Lisa expressed the following sentiment:

It helped me with my work, and my grades got better. Sometimes I did my work at home. I had a tutor at school until my teacher had to stop. I just go to the office now. I don't like science and I get Fs in that. My other grades are kind of good. I made a 100 today. I like to do my work down there. (Lisa) (Interview 5/26/93)

There are many experiences for the children to engage. These activities stand out in the minds of Danielle and Shantell, twin daughters of Sharon Entzminger: "We go outside to play games, jump rope, and hula-a-hoop, "they said almost in chorus. When asked about their grades Danielle remarked:

I got four Bs and the rest As. I like going down to the office. It is more fun than the YMCA. After we finish our work, we get to play. We get to go the park, have snacks, and decorate animals and color, sing songs and do programs. We did "Give Me A Break" for sharing time. We went to visit some friends at college. Becky, Liz, and I don't remember the other people, but its close by [volunteer tutors from Guilford College]. I like the other people. We get rewards and toys; and we sing lots of songs, and we do relays and go to the park and play on the seesaw and swings. We get have more fun, and we get to stay there until everybody goes home. Sometimes we even get to walk home with Tonia, Ricco, Nicole; and I forgot their names. We like it over there. We watch videos, 101 Dalmatians and the Little Mermaid.(Interview 2/10/93)

Well, it's fun and everything, and it helps children think more positive about themselves instead of thinking negative about themselves. They help you with your school work, and you understand different things better. (Kristin) (Interview 3/2/93)

Sometimes people make them mad by not doing their work when they try to encourage you in a nice way. Then they have to go about it meanly because some kids don't want to believe in themselves and that they can do it so they stop trying after the tutors try to encourage them to try harder. (Kristin)

The fact that people care and they don't let you do what you want to do. They don't let you just run around. You have to do your work before you go outside or get a snack. They really care whether you do your work or not. If you need help on a project or need to go to the library, they are there to help you. They help you find research on your project. (Tonia) (Interview 6/8/93)

Each perspective on the issue of the effectiveness of

Expanding Horizons indicate that this program has met the needs of the students who were in regular attendance. The students may well be the best indicators of this program's effectiveness. Their candor does not mask what they actually feel. The comments gained in the interviews, appear to confirm the tremendous value the program has had on the attitudes of parents and students and their subsequent academic success. A primary result is the outlook of the students is brighter, and they view education as an effective means for lifting them from where they are to where they wish to be.

Member Checks

Utilizing the idea of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who view "member checks" as "insights gleaned from one group that can be tested with another" (p. 314), the researcher identified Mr. Bratcher, Assistant Principal at Guilford Middle School; Mrs. Murrill, Media Specialist at Guilford Middle School; Mrs. McAllister, GEDC Program Director; and Mrs. Troxler, President of the Resident Community Council as the primary stakeholders of this evaluation. In order to verify the accuracy of this document and ensure the accurate preservation of the voices of the informants, they were asked to provide their reflections as a post study evaluation of the Expanding Horizons program.

Each stakeholder was requested to comment on the following:

- 1) The accuracy of this document in revealing the intent and outcomes of Expanding Horizons.
- 2) A current program update.
- 3) Changes that need to be made in the document.
- 4) Program shortcomings-Personal reflections and Implications.

Mrs. Proctor's deep commitment to her community became readily evident as she related the numerous successes of the resident council while serving as president. She remains extremely interested though her health problems limit her active involvement. After our first formal interview, Mrs. Proctor expressed an interest in seeing a draft of the dissertation. The researcher provided her with an earlier draft to which she made additional suggestions and offered further clarifications. All roads seemed to point to Mrs. Proctor when pertinent community information was needed. It was because of her expertise on community matters that many telephone calls and informal interviews were conducted. A year later the researcher contacted her requesting a final member check. Mrs. Proctor responded enthusiastically. Within the same week, she called to say that she had drafted her responses. After more reflection of responses to the member check, she called twice to offer explanations of her

comments, and to make changes. Mrs. Proctor provided the following feedback:

I've just finished going over your dissertation again. I'm still amazed at all the work we accomplished here at Westview Valley. Your dissertation, from the standpoint of educating the children, is correct in theory and in implementation. This program met well the needs of groups of people that were not properly motivated for whatever the reasons: maybe discrimination, economics, and or the home environment.

Please make note of one of the comments from my interview. The sentence "just everything that they asked us to do we did" is incorrect. We did what was responsible, reasonable, sensible, and within the bounds of good conduct. I also consulted with an attorney on those matters that affected the council, directly and indirectly. We were advised not to get involved in some matters.

Also to my knowledge no one on our community watch reported who was going in and out of anyone's apartment. I'm sure most complexes like this one have people who do just that but from my point of view the council did not have the interest or the time to keep the management informed of such activity unless it affected us personally. The community watch was solely designed to fight crime.

I have spoken with several parents and children in the Expanding Horizons program in regard to the program's impact

on student behavior in the community and positive comments were often given. Some children attending the tutorial session are yet experiencing problems such as attending without their homework, and they often exhibit disruptive behavior.

We are a culturally diverse community. The tutorial program is a success even if it only benefits a few children in this community. The ideal scenario and long term goal should be that not even one child is excluded, overlooked, neglected, or kept from getting a quality education in these United States of America where equal education for all is a right.

As members of the community, we were operating independently prior to GEDC coming into our community. The need to organize as a resident council working together was what GEDC helped us realize. A community watch was established prior to my moving here, although it was a fragmented effort. Reporting to the office was the rule of the day in this complex and in all probability will continue. An organized council was able to work for positive changes over time by working through the system. We desired only to fight legally against that which was unfair and unjust for a people having been greatly discriminated against.

As a council, we believed education and crime prevention had to start at the community level to be

effective. The children at Westview, like most children, have a good spirit and Expanding Horizons has proved to be invaluable in helping many develop and reach their potential. The program, however, does not offer much for the older adolescents. Teenagers fourteen and above need programs on conflict resolution skills, job apprenticeships, and values. Mentors involved in self-esteem building would be most valuable to this population of older teens.

Mrs. McAllister, Program Director for GEDC, provided the researcher tremendous insight into the programs and services that are available to meet the needs of residents in poor communities. Her intense efforts were directed in training and empowering the residents to take responsibility, to create changes in their community, and to ultimately provide a safe and nurturing environment for the children. Mrs. McAllister was very active at each of the tutorial sites. She provided invaluable assistance to the researcher through both formal and informal interviews as well as numerous telephone calls. Mrs. McAllister is no longer with GEDC, but eagerly consented to read this document to discern its accuracy and clarity. Mrs. McAllister provided the following comments concerning the reading of the dissertation which provided the researcher with additional insight:

After you have won the trust of parents, they are more open to forming partnerships with entities that can provide

support. It is not easy being a parent these days, even if you have the educational, economical, and parent support systems. Poor parents may lack some or all of these. Sometimes it takes all they have to merely provide the basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing.

I think the key to is to somehow instill into the parents their own self-worth, a stronger sense of responsibility that extends beyond providing for basic needs (academic enrichment and cultural exposure for example). Creating a sense of empowerment in their lives was a means to diminish the helplessness and hopelessness so very apparent in some residents in low socio-economic environments. What makes GEDC special is that this was the very thing we are trying to instill in the children. I'm proud to say it has worked in this community slowly-but-surely. Our desire was to equip students to transfer skills acquired beyond this community to their larger world.

One component of the GEDC program was increasing parent involvement in the school. Even though we didn't get the level of parental involvement we expected, we did document many positive results. We have found that reinforcement, incentives, and recognition seemed to be the most effective strategies for creating those changes.

I feel that it is important for schools to take a more active role in encouraging parental involvement in their child's learning. Schools must actively recruit and

welcome poor parents in positive ways in an effort to diminish those negative fears and feelings relating to the school. This can be accomplished as school personnel become sensitive to special needs of the poor students and meet effectively the information needs of the parents.

We placed a great deal of effort in providing enrichment for our students in the areas of technology, math, and science in the tutorial program. These disciplines have been identified as tools which enhance the chances of success in life for students, and prepare them to compete more effectively. The at-risk child is operating from a deficit from the beginning for various reasons. Our purpose was to get parents involved and increasing the possibility of success for these students. The premise was that the school, parents and the community's involvement for the sake of the children was vital.

In the area of community involvement, I feel that this is where more research should be directed. Both parents and students in poor neighborhoods need educational and enrichment opportunities. Many governmental programs merely apply band-aids to the problems because the depths of the maladies of poverty are not fully understood. The answers, we have found, are not clearly apparent. I feel GEDC went a long way in educating the community.

The involvement of the Jaycees and area colleges provided the students with resource people and activities as

well as exposure to human resources from the wider community. The college students themselves provided feedback to the respective professors on the experiences gained in the Expanding Horizons program. It was then that colleges called us and asked that our program accommodate their students in the area of tutoring. They utilized the structured training (theory), the role playing, teaching experience, and the subsequent evaluation to provide classroom experience. Business and civic organizations provided both funding and enrichment experiences to the community residents.

It became apparent that as fears began to subside, parental engagement in the programs offered through GEDC increased. Students and parents in the community worked toward self-improvement which ultimately was the most important goal of our program.

Mr. Larry Bratcher, Assistant Principal at Guilford Middle School, and Mrs. Murrill, Media Specialist, have spent many hours in the planning and the implementation of Expanding Horizons. The researcher's first informal interview with Mr. Bratcher, revealed an educational administrator with an earnest desire to provide needed services to a selected population of students at Guilford Middle School. His eyes and facial expressions bespoke of an endeavor to which he was totally committed. Each of the interviews and subsequent calls always yielded additional

updates on the program as it related to increasing positive family and community climate and their impact on student behaviors. Mrs. Murrill is the present coordinator of the program due to Mr. Brachter's transfer to another middle school. They have provided their insights concerning this evaluation.

As a present stakeholder in this evaluation of the home-school-community partnership, known as Expanding Horizons, it is with pleasure that I attest to its accuracy. Mrs. Legrand has effectively revealed the program in the dissertation. She is on target in her depictions as to the program's goals, intent, and outcomes.

In my view, after reading the document, I see no need of any changes. Although my participatory role in the program has changed (due to a job transfer), I remain involved through my affiliation with the Greensboro Education and Development Council (GEDC) as a Board of Directors member. I also receive feedback regularly through Mrs. Murrill who is actively engaged in the program. From these sources of information, it can be said that Expanding Horizons, having endured the change in directorship, [Mrs. McAllister assumed a new position] continues to meet the special needs of this community and its residents, by creating effective partnerships to those who are amenable to this program.

Mrs. Murrill states, "As the present coordinator of the Expanding Horizons program, I deem the characterization of the program to be accurate. In response to a program update, she attested to a summer trip to Atlanta which provided nine students from Westview Valley a very exciting cultural experience. Our efforts in the program are still directed toward increasing and maintaining community and parental involvement in the lives of young people."

Chapter V provides a summary of the previous data. It also represents the conclusions and recommendations of the study by the researcher.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CLOSING REMARKS

Expanding Horizons, a home-school-community program, was offered by Guilford Middle School in Greensboro, North Carolina. This study was designed to examine the extent to which the strategies of the program: a) created home-school-community linkages and promoted more involvement in the academic life of children; b) facilitated changes in behavioral and attitudinal outcomes of students, parents/caretakers, and community members. In order to assess the effectiveness of the Expanding Horizons Program, the Naturalistic Responsive Evaluation paradigm was employed. The analysis of the interview data of key informants and school and program records and documents, provide the basis upon which the study was evaluated. Expanding Horizons utilized parental involvement and community commitment as vital components in the education of children.

Conclusions

The literature provides evidence of the importance of parents in the education of children. Epstein and Henderson (1987) stressed that positive family dynamics were

correlated with student academic success. Lynch and Stein (1982), and Williams (1987) addressed the anguished relationship that many poor and minority parents have with the school. Armor, Gilliam and Wellisch (1976) regard parents as vital ingredients in a school improvement program, verifying that students performed at a higher level when parents were involved. Comer (1988) stressed the importance of the training of minority parents and the community to meet the academic needs of children. Louis and Miles (1990) stated that knowledge of the community dynamics was important in meeting the needs of children and their parents. Lightfoot (1978) regarded that school effectiveness was commensurate to its responsiveness to the needs of its constituents. The purpose of Expanding Horizons, a school sponsored endeavor, was to address the special needs of poor minority youth through the active engagement of parents and to secure the support of the community on behalf of its young people. The conclusions focus on the effectiveness of the strategies employed by Expanding Horizons as evolved from this study. The conclusions related to each question are based on the analysis of data in Chapter IV.

1. What parental linkages were established as a result of the "Expanding Horizons" program?

Guilford Middle School personnel, GEDC personnel and parents have attested to the number of linkages which grew

out of the Expanding Horizons program. Many attempts were made by Expanding Horizons to alleviate the fears toward the school or apathy of the parents of Westview Valley. Expanding Horizons recognized parent and community involvement as strong determinants for the success or failure of the program. It was for this reason that intense efforts by Mrs. McAllister, GEDC Program Director, Mr. Bratcher, Mrs. Murrill and other Guilford Middle School personnel explored the reasons for parent passivity and worked diligently to engage parents and the community in projects on behalf of children. The parents interviewed outlined the value of these new linkages to their lives and in the lives of their child(ren). Programs and services provided by Guilford Middle School and GEDC afforded linkages to the school and the larger community. Though not in the numbers anticipated, parents profited from the services provided and became more fully involved in the education of their child(ren). School visitations and home-school correspondence by the parents involved in Expanding Horizons offer evidence of increased parental linkages. The increase in student academic performance and improved behavior provide additional support to this contention. Mrs. Yusef and Mrs. Harris made their first school contacts through the encouragement of the Expanding Horizons personnel. Parent education was an important component and GEDC provided seminars on effective parent-teacher

conferencing and parent-child relationships. The active communication between the school, home and "Expanding Horizons" provided the impetus for parents to initiate and create continued linkages with the school.

2. Was there evidence of increased parent involvement with their children?

Expanding Horizons encouraged the involvement of parents in the academic life of their child(ren). Mrs. Harris, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Wade provide relevant examples of parents who became active and effective in the education of their children even as far as tutoring. Moreover, the parents gained confidence in this task through visitations to the center and gained tools which they used to provide tutoring at home. The literature reported that tutoring is the most effective type of parental involvement (Sattes, 1989). Mrs. Diggs noted an increase in the school involvement of parents from Westview Valley, though not in the numbers desired. She attributed this increase in parental involvement to Expanding Horizons. Student grades, and behavior improved as indicated by the year-end academic and behavior profiles in Chapter IV. Both school and program personnel provided testimony to parents taking an active lead in the education of their children. Harold Cone and Sharon Entzminger (tutors) shared instances of how they as parents render support to their child(ren)'s learning

through their insistence on their child's attendance at the tutorial sessions.

3. What community linkages with the school were outcomes of this program?

Expanding Horizons sought to bring services and programs which grew out of the community needs assessment. Mr. Bratcher served as a most important liaison between the school, "Expanding Horizons," and the community. The active engagement of Mr. Bratcher, Mrs. Murrill, and Mrs. McAllister in the community and their associations with Mrs. Proctor and the resident council provided Guilford Middle School the opportunity to provide needed services and linkages to the community.

4. What changes in the community's involvement in the lives of children has occurred?

The African adage, "It takes a whole village to educate a child" was a primary focus of Expanding Horizons. Community member participation in the lives of children better ensures that students attain the level of success consistent with their capabilities. Many of the efforts of the community resident council were directed toward the safety of the youth. Parents are still engaged in monitoring the activity of the children. For example, many parents provide a watchful eye over their children and other neighborhood children; this is a carryover from the community watch.

5. What activities do parents and community members engage in to promote the well-being of children?

Mrs. Proctor related the intense effort expended by the community resident council to create a sense of community in Westview valley. In addition, the efforts of Guilford Middle School and GEDC resulted in positive changes in the lives of the residents. Issues related to providing a safe community were confronted first. Letters and calls on the part of many residents prompted the city to look into changing bus pick up points to ensure the safety of the children. They tackled such problems as personal, home, and community safety and became empowered agents of change. Education was viewed as an important element toward empowerment. An educational program for the youth was eagerly received. The "community watch" was an important endeavor which sought to create a safe community. The data suggest a decrease in negative youth behaviors.

The council sought to deal with the drug activity (perceived as a great destroyer of human potential) which was aimed at the residents of the community. The community watch and police surveillance sought to curtail this activity. It was, however, this watch that created a great deal of dissension and distrust within the community. A partial breakdown in the community organization through harassment of the community leaders resulted. However, the

safety of the children is still attended to through parent community watches.

6. What changes in behavior have developed among selected students that are related to the "Expanding Horizons" community based program?

The students bore testimony of changes in attitude, behavior, and school performance. Kristin, Ann, Traci and Lisa have spoken in regard to this. Tonia provided a prime example of how a nurturing environment produced positive changes in attitudes, grades and behavior when she said: "I was making real bad grades because I wouldn't do my homework. My grades were really bad, but when I got in the program I started to bring my grades up." The influence of a nurturing home, school, and after school program, led to her subsequent success. Each child spoke of the encouragement they received as the primary impetus for their academic successes.

7. What changes in attitudes have developed among parents in this program?

Several parents have been brought into an effective working relationship with the school, some for the very first time. As they saw their children excelling, they ventured to become more active in their academic growth. Mrs. Yusef spoke in regard to her change in attitude.

At one time I wouldn't go to the PTA meetings because I didn't see any need and because I didn't feel comfortable. I didn't know what they were

talking about, and I wasn't interested. Then they started having the meetings down there . . . I learned some things at the meetings . . . I would just go to the school and listen anyhow. She [Sharon] had told me many times to go to the school and listen, and I told her it wasn't worth it. Not to me it wasn't because I wasn't thinking about what they were talking about. I did find out that when you go to a PTA meeting they are talking about kids. So I took her advice and went to the school. (Interview 5/26/93)

Parents offered praise for the program and program personnel that gave their children the confidence and skills to excel. Parents began to view themselves as partners with the school and Expanding Horizons and were party to the success their children were experiencing. Parents advocated the value of schooling and learning as a life coping skill to their children (much effort precedes success). Parental attitudes have changed because the program was seen as making a drastic difference in the lives of children. Some parents made direct contacts with the school for the first time. This is viewed as a most important outcome of Expanding Horizons.

8. What changes in attitudes have developed in the community as a result of this program?

Awards programs provided an opportunity for the community to share in the successes of young people. The community watch was an important endeavor which provided a safe environment for the youth at Westview Valley. The garnering of community support for benefit of children was an important outcome of the program. Community support was

viewed as an additional resource complementing the efforts of parents, Guilford Middle School, and Expanding Horizons. Visitations from college students provided important role models for the children. Expanding Horizons also provided programs which provided the community an opportunity to celebrate the success of the students.

9. What are the outcomes and strengths of the program?

The Expanding Horizons program dealt with meeting the needs of poor minority youth, their families and the community. Reclaiming the Westview Valley community and empowering the citizens were accomplished through difficult yet rewarding work. The efforts expended by selected staff at Guilford Middle School, the Westview Valley Resident Council, and GEDC to benefit of the community are to be applauded.

Shedding the cloak of indifference and helplessness on the part of parents, students and the community was an important endeavor of Expanding Horizons creating a sense of empowerment. High expectations for student success were fostered through increased parental involvement. Family and community support services, greatly needed in poor communities, was provided through Expanding Horizons. As a result of this program some reluctant parents became active in the education of children. The program offered a local site that provided educational assistance. The utilizing of

community resources gave the program community ownership. Even parents not involved at the site recognized the availability of a resource center which could meet the needs of their children. Teachers viewed the program positively and the grades of students offered verification of the program's effectiveness. Expanding Horizons was an important program providing enrichment and remediation. The Washington trip made a powerful impact on the youth who participated and served as an incentive to the young men, and the Atlanta trip provided yet another culturally rewarding experience. The students in regular attendance at Expanding Horizons rendered their accounts of increased confidence, self-esteem and improved academic performance. These positive changes were consistent with what the literature asserts about the impact of increased parental support. The program served ,however, only a small percentage of the children in the community. The results are consistent with previous studies. It is thus apparent that effective linkages were created as documented by parent, school, and community communications, as well as anecdotal records, and student grades.

Recommendations of the Study

The following recommendations regarding the home-school-community program are made based on the conclusions drawn from this study:

1. that there be greater effort to extensively involve the more reluctant parents into effective partnerships of this type.

2. that there be an early identification of elementary students in need of intervention strategies as used by Expanding Horizons.

3. that the school provide all teachers working with children of the poor with inservice workshops that would encourage effective home-school communication and prepare parents as effective educators.

4. that on-going training workshops which address the particular needs of poor parents to strengthen the home-school-community ties be provided to all school faculty.

5. that the school provide strategies to train parents as educators for their children.

6. that Expanding Horizons provide programs to meet the needs of older youth in the community.

Recommendations for Further Research

The study suggests additional areas of research which include the following recommendations:

1. Conduct studies of programs similar in nature which encompass a broader population.
2. Conduct research on the successful efforts of other Home-School-Community partnerships.
3. Conduct research on the roles of school's having created long term, positive linkages to minority communities.
4. Conduct research on how to extensively involve school faculty in attending to special needs of poor and minority students, their families and the community.
5. Conduct workshops on effective home-school-community communication.
6. Conduct a follow-up study to determine the level of continued parent involvement.

Closing Remarks

Academic success of poor Black children lags significantly behind the rest of the student population. Expanding Horizons was concerned with meeting the needs of the children, their parents and the community in Westview Valley. The children have spoken concerning the benefit of

the Expanding Horizons program to them. Early and continued interventions on behalf of poor children is vital toward positively changing student attitudes and performance. The enlistment of more parents engaged in the education of their children is crucial. Too few of the residents and their children were involved in the program. Additional efforts are necessary to engage the more reluctant parents in the education of their children. Increasing the pool of committed parents may afford more of the unmotivated youngsters in Westview Valley to share in the positive experiences of the seven students in this study.

Expanding Horizons provided role models which are vitally needed in economically depressed communities. Positive role models provided the students additional advocates. It is of particular importance that the children learned that success comes as a result of intense personal effort. Parents and program personnel insisted on the value of hard work and provided the rudiments of a most essential work ethic. Their subsequent success fueled the expenditure of continued effort. The students have gained confidence in their abilities. Greater effort on the part of the school in meeting the needs of poor students and their families may drastically reduce the cycle of generational failure.

Empowerment of this low socioeconomic community came as a result of intense work on the part of school staff, GEDC staff and community personnel. These efforts paid off and

gave evidence of a people concerned about themselves and their children thus challenging some of the myths/generalizations relating to the poor. Poor parents have positive goals for their children but often lack the resources and knowledge to be effectively engaged in their education. Gradually, through persistent effort, the parents and children viewed positive changes taking place.

An important theme that emerged was that parents made a difference in the lives of their children through their involvement in Expanding Horizons. They shared in their child's improvement and thus had ownership in their child's success. They were empowered to seek services for the children and insisted that they utilize them.

The engagement of Guilford Middle School and GEDC in the community provided the impetus for positive communication. Especially important were the efforts on the part of the school to provide for the community's needs. Some community residents profited from food, books, and toys provided by programs sponsored by the Guilford Middle School. Funding which provided educational resources and recreational equipment was an important example of outside organizations willing to help.

Effective home-school-community linkages required the efforts of school, community, and program personnel. The tutors served as liaisons between the school and parents providing effective networking between school and community.

Celebration of student accomplishments through awards day programs provided valuable incentives for their continued effort. The attendance of the community residents at awards ceremonies gave them the opportunity to praise and show the children that they were important and valued members of the community. Improved grades and positive school performance replaced the poor behaviors exhibited by the children.

Parent interviews reveal that the Expanding Horizons program is a highly effective program. It provided a diversity of strategies consistent with the needs of the children, the parents and the community. Community education for adults and children through workshops and the tutorial were consistent with the program's goals. Evidences of improved self-esteem and academic performance were important outcomes through the use of outside role models who were brought into a positive working relationship with the community. Students developed pride in themselves through their efforts. Cultural activities rendered them proud of the accomplishments of other minority persons and inspired their personal improvement. Effective home, school, and community communication exists now for more parents as a result of the program. Efforts expended by school and outside agencies and the engagement of parents created a greater sense of empowerment.

This study struck a responsive chord for the researcher who is a classroom teacher. Like many teachers, efforts on

behalf of students were directed primarily during the school day due to time constraints. Poor attention and low academic performance has many underlying causes, especially in the case of the poor. The failure of many students to thrive in an educational setting may result from ineffective communication between the school, the home, and the communities in which they live. Garnering advocates for the children in each of these spheres can provide the incentives for young people to view academic success as a desirable and an attainable means of escaping the hardships of poverty.

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