

Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood

Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties

And Community Partners

Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties will lead the effort, in collaboration with multiple community partners, in the Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood Planning Year to build a continuum of solutions that will significantly improve the educational outcomes of children and youth in the Hudson City School District while simultaneously supporting the healthy development and well-being of the children and families in the District.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) becomes effective upon receipt of the Promise Neighborhood Planning Grant awarded by the U.S. Department on Education and outlines preliminary financial and programmatic commitments of each partner. The MOU for the grant application is one result of a year-long process and dialogue centering on addressing, through viable solutions, the identified and unidentified needs of children and youth in relation to academic success which ultimately will reduce poverty. This preliminary MOU exists among current partners but is not exclusive of the community collaborations that will be identified and occur during the planning year. Partners with Catholic Charities include: the Hudson City School District including the Hudson Bluehawk Nation Afterschool Program; Columbia County Department of Social Services; Columbia County Department of Human Services; The Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties; Columbia Opportunities, Inc. including

the Head Start program; Columbia-Greene Community College; and Candace La Rue and Associates.

All of the above organizations serve the designated Hudson City School District population and have a physical presence within the geographic boundaries of the Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood. Each holds its own vision and identity that aligns with the collective goal to transform the attitude and reality of the community to one of hope and possibilities for the future while respecting the rights of individuals. Catholic Charities holds firm to the commitment to work towards the common good, which goes beyond meeting basic needs to the right of individuals to reach their fullest potential. Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood Partners share this vision for the planning grant and for their respective service populations.

During the year-long discussions, the repeated theme for active engagement of community for input on needs and solutions was widely accepted by the partners as a key element in the Theory of Change. Only by meaningful involvement of the families, community, and businesses can significant change occur, with this involvement occurring at the onset and carrying on throughout the process. The planning year encompasses open forums, dialogues, work groups, and surveys with the youth and families that are expected to benefit from the continuum of solutions. Attention in the early childhood years, including prenatal care and quality early childhood education, are vital to the long-term success of youth graduating, transitioning to college and then to careers. Equally important is the support of parents and caregivers throughout the continuum to empower the primary teachers of youth with the sense of security and relief

from poverty, build their skills to align with children's needs, and to believe in education as the key to a successful future.

To accomplish this significant change requires a carefully organized process that looks at real and current data, to either confirm or alter belief systems. It requires active participation from those being looked at to change, it requires multiple perspectives, and it requires openness to new avenues of thinking and acting. The Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood Theory of Action revolves around collaborative work efforts for a common goal and shared responsibilities to the community. Additionally, the action is *with* the community members rather than *for*, thus building the chances of success at the same time as increasing resources and capacity.

Catholic Charities, as the lead agency, is responsible for administering, monitoring, and fiscal oversight of the project. Catholic Charities, under the duties of the Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood Director, would ensure the alignment of all planning year activities including those of partners, volunteers, and staff. Additionally, an Advisory Board will meet at least ten months of the planning year to serve as the governance structure with a specific focus on quality, dignity, and outcome success. The Advisory Board is made of partner representatives and community members, including parent and youth representatives to be appointed upon award. The Advisory Board will have between 12 and 15 members with a minimum of five members from the geographic area, public officials representing the area, and/or those experiencing poverty as defined in the notice.

Catholic Charities, the Hudson City School District, and all partners will share aggregate data for the purpose of planning and building a comprehensive, longitudinal data management system complying with Federal, State, and other privacy laws. Furthermore, each partner agrees to work with the National Evaluator for Promise Neighborhood and to participate in Community of Practice Activities.

Partners, Mission, Commitments, Activities:

Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties, a ministry of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, is committed to active witness on behalf of the Scriptural values of mercy and justice. Catholic Charities, recognizing human need at all stages of life, responds to all persons regardless of race, creed or lifestyle, with special emphasis on the economically poor and vulnerable. Catholic Charities serves and empowers persons in need, advocates for a just society, and calls forth and collaborates with women and men of good will in fulfillment of its mission. Catholic Charities works within the Hudson City School District offering substance abuse prevention education programs across the grades and in the 21st Century Afterschool program. Making positive choices leads to positive results. Catholic Charities covers the full spectrum of ages aligned with Promise Neighborhood through a variety of programs including the Women, Infants, and Children program (WIC), Kinship Caregiving, Supervised Visitation and Parenting Classes, and Nutrition Outreach for food stamps. Catholic Charities pledges \$40,000 of in-kind service via donated time for work groups and community events, donated space, and donated materials, including \$8,000 of school supplies, holiday gifts, and emergency assistance.

Hudson City School District and the Hudson Bluehawk Afterschool Program. The Hudson City School District offers a free afterschool program as a recipient of a 21st Century and Advantage Afterschool Grant, for students K-12. The mission of the school district is to enable all children to meet high and challenging educational standards through quality programs and support services which promote the intellectual, physical, and cultural well-being of all students and families in our community. This would provide a foundation for lifelong learning and productive citizenship. The district and afterschool program pledge \$75,000 for in-kind services with participation in the Advisory Board, work groups, piloting programs, and donated meeting space.

Columbia County Department of Social Services provides vital services to the residents of Columbia County across the spectrum of ages and is located in the City of Hudson. The Department of Social Services is on the front line with those in need and those in crisis. Columbia County Department of Social Services pledges \$10,000 of in-kind support for staff participation on the Advisory Board, work groups, and provision of essential data.

Columbia County Department of Human Services, governed by a Community Service Board with public and private representation, provides mental health services, case management, and is the local governing unit for the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse. The Department of Human Services pledges \$2,830 of in-kind support for participating in the Advisory Board, work groups, donated space, and providing special expertise.

The Mental Health Association of Columbia-Greene Counties is dedicated to being a community leader in education, prevention, rehabilitation and recovery. They strive to ensure inclusion and

the fair and equal treatment of people with mental illness. They work to accomplish this through effective, innovative, and collaborative programming provided by a dedicated staff working in a dynamic, responsibly managed, well-respected organization. Among the services provided by The Mental Health Association are school and community-based intervention programs, service coordination, parenting classes and parent support groups, and family advocacy. They have written and administered the Afterschool Advantage grant. The Mental Health Association pledges \$1,634 of in-kind services for participation on the Advisory Board, work groups, donated space, and trainings.

Columbia Opportunities, Inc. is the community action agency of Columbia County. A multitude of services are provided such as weatherization, family literacy, and Head Start. Columbia Opportunities, Inc. pledges \$5,000 of in-kind services for staff participation on the Advisory Board, work groups, donated space, and \$10,000 in additional funds for pilot programming centering on early childhood.

Candace LaRue and Associates (CLRA) will be a vital member of the fundraising team. As experienced grant writers with a statistician on board, they have assisted in the pre-planning process and wrote the grant for the 21st Century and Extended School Day/School Violence Prevention Program. Personnel from Candace LaRue and Associates pledge \$18,500 of in-kind support for participation in Community of Practice activities, completion of a research paper and a research grant. In addition, CLRA has already recruited two private donations of valuable services to this effort (see letters of commitment from DLG Wealth Management and Dr. Hope

Casto) and will continue to seek additional private support for the Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

Columbia-Greene Community College welcomes a geographically and culturally diverse student population and recognizes its responsibilities for providing transfer, vocational, technical, remedial, and lifelong learning for all. The college is dedicated to developing and administering high quality, post-secondary educational programs that are accessible to the residents of the service area. C-GCC is responsive to the changing needs of the community and maintains a caring environment that is dedicated to personal attention. The College provides post-secondary education and is the only college within the geographic boundaries of the proposed promise neighborhood. Furthermore, the college has an on-site child care center serving the children of students as a priority. The College pledges \$1,000 of in-kind services via donated time for work groups and events.

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Signatures below indicate agreement to the Preliminary Memorandum of Understanding that is effective from award of Planning grant and continues for the duration of the planning year.

Authorized signatures will further act as the point of contact going forward or shall identify another person in their place.

Signatures

Print Name

Title

Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties

Hudson City School District and the Hudson Bluehawk 21st Century and Advantage Afterschool Program

Columbia County Department of Social Services

Columbia County Department of Human Services

The Mental Health Association of Columbia and Greene Counties

Columbia Opportunities, Inc.

Columbia-Greene Community College

Candace LaRue and Associates