

Community Asset Assessment: **MAYNARD EVANS HIGH SCHOOL & COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Findings & recommendations from a cross-sector perspective



School of Public Administration
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Executive Summary

This research seeks to provide a preliminary assessment of service needs and gaps for students and families associated with Evans High School. The main areas of concern for each group is to identify and locate available key resources in regards to food, clothing, after-school recreational and educational programs, and parent employability skills. To accomplish the research objectives, a unique partnership was created between graduate students from the University of Central Florida and high school students from Evans High School. A survey conducted by Evans High School students was done in an attempt to better understand the school's student population, and resources available to them and their families in the community. Overall students were optimistic in the availability of resources and the current level of resources each student and family has, whether it be food or clothing, or the ability to get a job.

Teams of graduate students from the University of Central Florida were tasked with scheduling interviews with government officials, non-profit service providers, and representatives from the faith community to ascertain information about available services in the Pine Hills community and identify any gaps in services. The information gathered during these interviews was then analyzed to develop recommendations designed to help Evans Community School consider what they can do in order to meet the needs of students and parents, thus enabling potential for greater academic success.

Some recommendations that were suggested after examining some of the challenges and needs of the students and residents of Pine Hills are as follows:

- Develop communications plan for outreach, re: services available
- Invite organizations to come out to PTA or other community meetings
- Operate as a convener and hub to bring organizations together across government, nonprofit, and faith-based sectors
 - Engage specific agencies to address challenges across service areas (e.g., sheriff's office to address safety concerns; Lynx to address transportation)
- Establish sub-networks like K.N.E.C. in each sector (government, nonprofit, and faith-based)
- Add a liaison position to the Student Leadership Council to connect community organizations and students
- Develop a community garden on campus (Second Harvest recommended as a partner)
- Create a mobile kitchen, open outside of school time, to provide healthy food options
- Partner with Bike Share program for students and parents
- Provide Lynx bus passes to all students (look at bus routes and times), or partner with faith organizations to provide shuttles for students

These recommendations offer opportunities for Evans Community School to work with non-profit, faith-based and governmental organizations to better meet the needs of students and families in the Pine Hills community.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Service Learning and Previous Work

This research seeks to provide a preliminary assessment of service needs and gaps for students and families associated with Evans High School. To accomplish the research objectives, a unique partnership of graduate students from the University of Central Florida and high school students from Evans High School was created in a process Dr. Thomas Bryer, professor for the graduate class, calls “Joined Up Service Learning.” This is a process whereby students from across education levels are brought together in shared learning and research, with the intent to produce

recommendations for strengthening communities. Service learning generally has been shown to be beneficial for student learning and community partners; this unique partnership variation has the potential to enhance both outcomes.

The research builds on a Joined Up Service Learning project conducted in spring 2011 where graduate and high school students conducted a series of focus groups with students, teachers, parents, faith organization leaders, and other community stakeholders in order to determine community needs. Recommendations were developed in five areas: (1) promote student educational success, (2) engage and provide resources to parents, (3) engage and partner with faith organizations, (4) engage community members, and (5) sustain relationships. The final report can be downloaded from <http://tinyurl.com/EvansReport>.

The current research was conducted in two phases: (1) graduate students conducted interviews with service producers and providers from government, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations, and (2) high school students administered a survey of their fellow students. Both instruments are included as an appendix in the report. There were a total of 16 interviews conducted, and 245 surveys collected.

2. Core Questions

Teams of graduate students from the University of Central Florida were tasked with scheduling interviews with government officials, non-profit service providers and representatives from the faith community to ascertain information about available services in the Pine Hills community and to identify any gaps in services. Students from Evans High School surveyed their peers to further identify any gaps in services and assess the perception of services currently available to students and their families. The interviews and surveys focused on identifying services in the areas of food and clothing for students and families, after-school recreational or educational services for students, and skill development services for parents to better prepare them for the job market. The interview and survey participants were asked variations of the following questions:

1. My first question is about food and clothing resources that are available for students and families around Evans High School and within Pine Hills. Can you tell me what, if any resources you have available?
 - a. [If they have food and clothing resources]: Do you have sufficient resources to meet the need of individuals and families that seek your assistance? If not, can you describe in general terms how great the need is, and how much more you would need to meet the need? And here, we are just talking about the need as it exists in Pine Hills.
 - b. Do you refer individuals and families to other organizations for food and clothing if you do not have sufficient resources to meet their needs? If so, to what other organizations do you refer individuals and families?
 - c. Besides those organizations to which you refer individuals and families, what other organizations in government, nonprofit or faith-based sectors, do you know provide access to food and clothing resources for students and families in Pine Hills?
 - d. What do you perceive as the challenges for students and families from Pine Hills to gain access to needed food and clothing resources? Do you have any ideas about how to better meet the need?
2. My next question concerns after-school recreational or educational programs available for students in Pine Hills. Can you tell me what, if any, programs your organization runs or supports?
 - a. [If they run or support programs]: Do you have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of students from Pine Hills? For instance, is your

- program available every day of the week? Do you have sufficient space for all students who might be interested in your program?
- b. Do you refer students to other organizations for after-school programs? If so, to what other organizations do you refer individuals and families?
 - c. Besides those organizations to which you refer individuals and families, what other organizations in government, nonprofit or faith-based sectors, do you know run after-school programs for students from Evans and Pine Hills?
 - d. What do you perceive as the challenges for students to gain access to after-school programs? (Prompt if necessary: Access to transportation? Cost-prohibitive? Lack of parental support? Other?)
3. My next question concerns availability to parents or adults generally in Pine Hills to gain employability skills, including literacy, computer training, and other job training. Can you tell me what, if any, programs or services your organization runs or supports in this area?
- a. [If they run or support programs/services]: Do you have sufficient capacity and resources to meet the needs of parents and other adults from Pine Hills?
 - b. Do you refer individuals to other organizations for employability skills development, including literacy? If so, to what organizations do you refer individuals?
 - c. Besides those organizations to which you refer individuals, what other organizations in government, nonprofit or faith-based sectors do you know run skills development programs or provide skills development services for parents and other adults from Pine Hills?
 - d. What do you perceive as the challenges for students to gain access to needed employability skills development programs and services? (Prompt if necessary: Lack of awareness of programs? Lack of incentive to participate? Other?)
4. My final question is open ended. Do you have any final comments about service needs or gaps in Pine Hills?

The information gathered during these interviews was then analyzed to develop recommendations designed to help Evans Community School consider what they can do in order to meet the needs of students and parents, thus enabling potential for greater academic success.

3. Survey Findings

A survey conducted by Evans High School students was done in an attempt to better understand the school's student population and resources available to them and their families, in the community. The survey was made up of twelve different questions, and divided into three different sections: food and clothing, after-school and recreational programs, and employability resources. 245 surveys were returned. The results are described below.

3.1 After-school and educational activities

Evans High School students were asked to respond to a variety of questions concerning their after-school activities. About forty percent of the students surveyed reported that they went directly home after the school day was over and about thirty percent stated they stayed at the school for studying or extracurricular activities. A smaller percentage went to off-campus activities such as sports. No student reported going to church-related activities, and a little over three percent reported having an after-school job.

Students were surveyed as to whether they believed there were a lot of options for after-school activities. This question was answered on a four-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Thirty-seven percent strongly agreed that there was a variety of options available for activities, fifty percent agreed, almost eleven percent disagreed, and just about two percent strongly disagreed. The question wording leaves the student interpretation open to on and off-campus activities that are conducted after school hours.

When surveyed about good use of after-school time, students reported about eighty percent in the strongly agree and agree category. Disagree held almost nineteen percent of the responses, and five percent for strongly disagree. In this question, students were asked to rate themselves based on their use of time, again leaving it open for interpretation as to what "good use" means.

Restrictions to participating in after-school activities was included in this survey to see what obstacles the students might face when deciding to partake in extracurricular activities, and again not restricted to purely on-campus after school activities. Lack of transportation was the main contributor, at forty percent. Coming in second, at about thirty percent, is an unfamiliarity of choices and options available to the students. Family obligations are close behind unfamiliarity at twenty-seven percent. Lack of money is around twenty percent. Eleven percent cited an unsafe environment. Sixteen students failed to answer this question.

3.2 Food

Students were surveyed on whether or not they had enough food at home. Over sixty-three percent of the students surveyed believed this was not an issue with strongly agree and twenty-eight percent agreed they had enough food. About six percent disagreed that they have enough food at home and two percent strongly disagreed. When asked whether the food provided at home was nutritious and balanced showed different results. While seventy-five percent of the students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed, about twenty-five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that the food they were provided included fruits and vegetables on a regular basis.

An additional food question was asked regarding emergency food needs. Students were asked to respond to the question with the following answers: food bank, church, other family members, other and not applicable. Students responded with the most likely option to be taken in the event there was a family food emergency. Food banks and churches got below five percent each. Going to a family member or friend, and not applicable each received thirty-eight percent. Other was about twenty-four percent.

3.3 Clothing

Clothing levels were identified in the surveys. Students were asked if they agreed they had enough clothing, and weather-specific clothing, to wear. Less than five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had enough clothing. Strongly agree had sixty-nine percent. In identifying where a student, or his or her family, would go if in need of clothing students responded mostly with not applicable. Twenty-one percent would go to a family or friend and eleven percent would go to a thrift store. Only three percent would go to a church.

3.4 Parental Employability

Evans High School students were surveyed on their perceptions of the resources their parents have to gain employability skills and job search assistance. Students were asked whether they agreed that their parents knew where to go to get assistance in obtaining a job. Forty-eight percent strongly agreed and twenty-eight percent agreed. About eight percent disagreed and strongly disagreed, leaving fifteen percent in the “Do not know” category. Twelve students did not answer the question.

When asked whether the students’ parents had the skills necessary to obtain and hold a job students were optimistic. Sixty-five percent agreed their parents had the skills necessary to compete in the workplace. Less than seven percent disagreed to some degree, and less than two percent did not know. Eleven students did not answer the question.

Students were asked if they perceived there to be enough jobs available for their parents to apply. About thirty-four percent responded separately with both strongly agree and agree. Twenty-one percent responded with disagree and about nine percent with strongly disagree. Fourteen students did not answer the question.

3.5 Overall

Overall students were optimistic in the availability of resources and the current level of resources each student and family has, whether it be food or clothing, or the ability to get a job.

4. Overall Summary of Findings

In order to identify some of the resources available to the students and families of Evans High School in the Pine Hills area, three different groups were created in serving this purpose. These groups identified the available resources from the government, nonprofit and faith-based organizations in the Pine Hills area. The main areas of concern for each group is to identify and locate available key resources in regards to food, clothing, after-school recreational and educational programs, and parent employability skills. Also a concern for each group was to identify some of the challenges foreseen by each organization for the families of Pine Hills area.

To best identify some of these resources and challenges in the area, each group has taken the initiative in having live interviews with members of each organization that currently have a significant effect in the area of Pine Hills. A summary of these findings will be written below in identifying some of the resources available and some challenges that lay ahead in serving the needs of people in Pine Hills.

4.1 Food

The geographical area of Pine Hills is categorized as a “food desert”. Food desert refers to an area where there are no fresh groceries such as fruits and vegetables in a close proximity to the residents of Pine Hills. This makes it difficult for the residents to get the proper nutrition needed. The only thing surrounding these residents is small food marts, which contain mostly canned and packaged food. This would be considered junk food to most. It is hard to get the proper nutrition with transportation being one of the challenges to the residents of Pine Hill.

The Second Harvest Food Bank is a main referral to its 500 partner agencies in regards to individuals’ needs including food. Second Harvest has started a program which allows partner agencies to buy food in bulk at a discounted rate. They have suggested that Evans Community School can have the same benefits of using the food purchase program to buy food at a discount for activities and other ways they see fit. It is questionable whether food banks provide fresh fruits/vegetables, or processed and canned foods. Also St. Andrew Catholic Church is a faith-based organization which directly provides food resources to people in need. Also, on the government side, Florida is looking to provide incentives to supermarkets such as Publix and Winn Dixie to build in the Pine Hills area.

There are multiple points of referral by nonprofit and faith-based organizations in regards to food resources. Second Harvest refers to multiple partnering agencies within its reach. Also, K.N.E.C. is a referring center for all faith organizations in the Pine Hills area to meet the needs of the people. There are also many obstacles to access fresh food such as transportation, lack of awareness, safety in the community, and economic viability for grocery chains.

4.2 Clothing

Clothing is another important resource needed for the residents of Pine Hills. One organization that helps with clothing resources is the Stonewall Jackson Drive for Kids. They hold a yearly drive where they supply multiple clothing needs to children. Last year's drive supplied over 4000 jackets and socks to children in need. Goodwill is a major nonprofit organization that provides the sufficient clothing resources available to students and families around Evans High School and within the Pine Hills community. Goodwill has multiple branches in the area, and the Goodwill on Orange Blossom Trail is the Pine Hills service location. Another organization referred by Goodwill is the Salvation Army.

Evans High School has partnered with The Jobs Partnership of Florida since 2011. This faith-based organization acknowledges the importance of wearing the proper professional attire that is required in today's job market. They have a program that is offered and aimed at training juveniles to groom and dress professionally and have a competitive mindset for today's workplace. This youth program is called Life Skills and it is offered a course. One part of the program is called "Suited for Success" and is directed toward male youths; the other part is called "Dress for Success" and is directed toward female youths. This is an extraordinary program as it teaches youths about the importance of attire in today's workplace and how to think competitively.

Also other faith-based organizations like the Noble Center, in care of Pine Hills Community Church, serves the Pine Hills area by supplying food resources to its residents. There is one main challenge for some people when it comes to clothing. This challenge is for those displaced homeowners that are living in cars to maintain and have a place for the clothing.

4.3 Educational and After-School Programs

Pine Hills has the highest juvenile delinquency rate in all of Florida, and the delinquency for girls is on the rise. This is a place where there is a large representation of incarcerated minorities, and is considered to be an unsafe area. Having after-school recreational and educational programs for youth in Pine Hills is a perfect way to keep them occupied and away from trouble.

The Heart of Florida United Way supports after-school programs such as Boys and Girls Club, Family Engagement in Community School and other outreach programs. The Community School concept goes with the idea that kids spend more time out of school than in school; therefore, they leave the school doors open until 9 p.m.. This provides students with a safe and positive environment to spend their time. This also academically supports kids, providing them with resources in a school atmosphere.

Goodwill also has two programs in particular that would benefit Evans students called Good Guides and Project Compass. Good Guides is a youth mentoring program that partners mentors with 12-17 year olds, and holds weekly meetings. During these meetings the kids are engaged in things like doing their homework, playing games, talking about their lives, and other activities. Project Compass is for students ages 14-18 who are non-violent youth offenders. These students are referred by Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), parents, and the Juvenile court. In this program, the goal is to educate and inspire them through a holistic approach, and to get their lives back on track and away from making the same mistakes.

The Pine Hills Community Performing Arts Center provides multiple after-school programs to the kids in the area. It provides FCAT tutoring and also has a mentoring program for girls. They are looking into supplying a boys mentoring program as well. They provide after school programs to help current students in subjects like art, history, and literacy, and help them correlate between each other. The center also would like to provide a future program that is directed towards single parenting. St. Andrews Catholic Church also provides a number of after-school programs, with limited capacity. Other organizations like the Urban League, YMCA, Worship Center, and County recreational programs are offered in the area. The challenges with attending some of these after-school programs lie with lack of transportation, time for single parents, safety, and also a lack of awareness in regards to what is offered.

4.4 Parent Employability Skills

Most problems are initially tackled at the home front. Therefore, it is important for the families of all students to have the right skills and tools at their disposal for today's job market. United Way is directly funding community school programs that will accomplish services that will provide adult literacy and employability skills. They funded part of the program aimed at financial literacy and employment programs within the Adult Literacy League as they hosted a financial week. In regards to employability skills, adults were taught what is required and the dos and don'ts. The organization also has a Public Ally whose main task is to help people obtain information in regards to Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA), and financial literacy.

Goodwill also offers financial literacy classes and vocational skills courses for adults. These classes include money smart seminars, direct placement services, employee development services, vocational evaluation, good works job connection, and computer skill training. Goodwill also offers access to computer labs where adults can work on their resumes, online classes, and engage in mock interviews. Another significant place that offers employability skills is The Jobs Partnership of Florida, a faith-based organization funded by the First Baptist of Central Florida. Last year was the first year they had their graduating class in the Pine Hills area. Classes are held twice a week with a capacity of about 50 people. The classes offer guides in developing soft skills, work ethic, relationships, respecting authority, working to the best of one's ability, attitude, conflict resolution, skill training, career assessment, interview skills, resume writing, job searching, and also how to dress for success. Adults also face some challenges in gaining employability skills like lack of transportation, single parenting with insufficient time to attend, lack of awareness, and lack of motivation (Goodwill provides peer support process).

4.5 Overview of Recommendations

Some recommendations that were suggested for Evans Community School after examining some of the challenges and needs of the students and residents of Pine Hills are as follows:

- Develop communications plan for outreach re: services available
- Invite organizations to come out to PTA or other community meetings

- Operate as a convener and hub to bring organizations together across government, nonprofit, and faith-based sectors
 - Engage specific agencies to address challenges across service areas (e.g., sheriff's office to address safety concerns; Lynx to address transportation)
- Establish sub-networks like K.N.E.C. in each sector (government, nonprofit, and faith-based)
- Add a liaison position to the Student Leadership Council to connect community organizations and students
- Develop a community garden on campus (Second Harvest recommended as a partner)
- Create a mobile kitchen, open outside of school time, to provide healthy food options
- Partner with Bike Share program for students and parents
- Provide Lynx bus passes to all students (look at bus routes and times), or partner with faith organizations to provide shuttles for students

5. Nonprofit Organizations

5.1 Interviews

Joan Nelson, Vice President of Community Involvement, Heart of Florida United Way

Kim Mowatt, MSW, The Evans Project

Dave Krepcho, President & CEO, The Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida

David Outing, Jobs Partnership of Florida, Inc.

Barbara Ansar, Charity & Love, Inc.

Bill Oakley, Goodwill Industries of Central Florida

Tim Pelhke, 4-H and The Garden

5.2 Educational and After-School Programs

Goodwill of Central Florida has multiple after-school programs that may benefit the students of Evans High School. Two programs in particular are Good Guides and Project Compass. Good Guides is a youth mentoring program that partners 12-17 year olds with mentors for weekly meetings. During these meetings, the pairs play games, work on homework, chat about life, and engage in other activities. Students are referred by the school, and the program currently hosts 125 students at a time. Project Compass is a program for students ages 14-18 who are considered non-violent youth offenders. These students are referred to the program from Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), parental recommendations, and the Juvenile Court. This program seeks to educate and inspire these students through a holistic approach to get them on the right track towards employment, and keep them from making the same mistakes. OPCS supports these programs by providing transportation, resources, and faculty while, Goodwill of Central Florida provides the facilities. Both programs are currently below capacity.

The Evans Project is considered a community resource provider, and is currently working on developing a resource guide specifically for services in the Pine Hills area. When The Evans project cannot provide immediate and direct service to individuals and families, referrals are

made to organizations that can provide proper and timely assistance. This organization provides anger management courses and life skills training to K-12 students that are currently on probation. Pine Hills has the highest juvenile delinquency rate in all of Florida, with the rate for juvenile delinquent girls on the rise. The Evans Project aims to prevent minorities from getting into the juvenile justice system, and works with juveniles already in the criminal justice system.

Orange County 4-H is another organization that provides recreational and educational opportunities for youth in Pine Hills. By partnering with schools and other nonprofit organizations, 4-H provides students with productive afterschool activities that teach leadership and critical thinking skills. Among these programs are the Horse Club and Urban Farming Club. Additionally, 4-H educates students on financial literacy, resume building, and job skills.

The Jobs Partnership of Florida offers life skills training for needy juveniles (including those with criminal records) wanting to enter the job market. The Jobs Partnership of Florida partners with churches in the community to recruit volunteers. Churches also provide facilities to hold life skills training courses. Their life skills training program is 6 weeks long and focuses on utilizing the bible as a guide to develop soft skills, work ethic, relationships, respecting authority, working to the best of one's ability, attitude, conflict resolution, and stewardship. Students are assigned a mentor from the local church. In addition, the program includes skills training that offers career assessment, interview skills, resume writing, job searching and, as mentioned previously, provides clothing in an effort to dress for success. A career fair is held for the students of the program upon graduation. Additionally, the Jobs Partnership maintains a job bank for the students to utilize. The Jobs Partnership is working with Evans Community School in an effort to get the parents of the students on track to better serve the students.

5.21 Resources Identified

Goodwill of Central Florida The Evans Project Orange County 4-H Jobs Partnership of Florida
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5.3 Food Resources

Pine Hills is considered a food desert. According to the USDA, a “food desert” is an area where people lack access to adequate grocery stores, and are therefore, forced to purchase groceries from corner food marts and gas stations. These stores stock large amounts junk food, snack food, and packaged food, but lack fresh meats and produce. Oftentimes, the fresh foods and vegetables available at such stores are damaged. The surprisingly high pricing in these stores increases the struggle for families and individuals living in poverty. The high pricing forces many community members to eat at fast food restaurants that supply cheap, but high-calorie foods.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida refers people in need of food and clothing to their 500 partner agencies based on the individual's need, current situation, and location. The Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida is very active in Pine Hills and is engaged in ongoing discussions with the Evans Community School regarding collaboration, but no formal agreement has been reached. One program offered by Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida allows partner agencies to buy food in bulk from the Bank at costs much lower than those at well-

known retailers. In 2011, Second Harvest sold \$3 million in food, retaining a \$250,000 profit, which was used towards program implementation and expansion of their facilities. Second Harvest believes Evans Community School could use the food purchase program to buy food for activities at a reduced cost. In addition, Second Harvest suggested that Evans Community School needs a "food czar," in which assigned personnel can focus on food programs and on all the facets for the community's food needs.

5.31 Resources Identified

Second Harvest Food Bank

5.4 Clothing Resources

The Heart of Florida United Way is an organization that helps connect individuals with organizations that provide needed services and resources. One program that may benefit the community of Pine Hills is *211 Information Call Center*. The 211 Information Call Center uses call tracking (which makes note of a caller's zip code and the type of service requested) to determine which areas of Pine Hills are in need of specific services. Thus, the organization is constantly aware of the basic needs of families and students in the area. In addition, families that register with The Heart of Florida United Way receive information on local organizations that provide food and clothing assistance.

Goodwill of Central Florida has sufficient clothing resources available for students and families around Evans High School and within Pine Hills. Goodwill of Central Florida offers clothing at the Orange Blossom Trail branch which oversees 5 additional branches located throughout the Central Florida area. Goodwill of Central Florida works with and recommends the Salvation Army as an additional resource for clothing and Habitat for Humanity Restores for home furnishing needs.

The Jobs Partnership of Florida partnered with Evans Community School for the first time in 2011 and offers two clothing programs for youth enrolled in their life skills courses:

“Suited for Success” (for males) and “Dress for Success” (for females). These programs are aimed at training juveniles to groom and dress professionally in order to build their self-esteem while establishing a competitive mindset for the job market.

5.41 Resources Identified

Goodwill of Central Florida Jobs Partnership of Florida Heart of Florida United Way

5.5 Parent Employability Skills

The Heart of Florida United Way is currently (with the help of organizations like the Children’s Home Society) funding family engagement positions in Evans Community School. This individual serves as a liaison between parents, neighboring organizations, The Heart of Florida United Way, and Evans High School. In addition, The Heart of Florida United Way hosts a variety of courses for adults that include financial literacy and employment skills training from organizations that include Adult Literacy League. The Heart of Florida United Way also works as a referral service, by helping low income families find organizations that focus on job placement.

Goodwill of Central Florida offers a plethora of financial literacy classes and vocational skills courses for adults. These classes include money smart seminars, direct placement services, employee development services, vocational evaluation, good works job connection, and computer skills training. These classes are free to adults as long as they have a high school diploma and display a genuine desire to gain employment. Goodwill of Central Florida also offers access to computer labs where adults can work on their resumes, online classes, and engage in mock interviews. There are 7 self-sufficiency centers in Central Florida to help meet the needs of adults interested in improving their lives through employment. There is currently a 2 to 3 week waiting list for these classes.

Unique, but beneficial in the programs area is Orange County 4-H. The most well-known program is their Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program, which was created to help families make sound decisions in regards to healthy eating and grocery budgeting. The coursework also provides students with jobs skills training applicable to the food industry. Additionally, individuals that engage in this program receive a University of Florida Certificate of Completion that may be useful when looking for employment. 4-H also offers courses that focus on financial literacy and leadership skills.

5.51 Resources Identified

Goodwill of Central Florida Orange County 4-H Heart of Florida United Way

5.6 Challenges

According to interviews conducted with leaders of nonprofit organizations, the most prominent issues identified were transportation and motivation. A major problem for individuals seeking employment is a lack of transportation. Owning a car is a great expense and oftentimes the upkeep of a car is not seen as a priority. When a family must choose between putting food on the table and getting an oil change, car maintenance will always be put on the back burner. These routine maintenance procedures help reduce the costs of owning a car in the long run, but are often unaffordable to low income families. Without sound transportation it is difficult to access resources, participate in vocational training, or secure a job. Additionally, there is a severe lack of motivation amongst individuals living in poverty. When applying for employment, adults get discouraged after being repeatedly turned down.

6. Faith-Based Organizations

6.1 Interviews

Reverend Michael Kimbrough , Pine Hills Community Performing Arts Center
Liz Buckley, FOCUS Orlando
Mrya Johnson, Kingdom Network and Empowering Communities (KNEC)
Dr. Kiley, St. Andrew Catholic Church



6.2 Educational and After-school Programs

The Pine Hills Community Performing Arts Center provides after-school programs to help students to put art, history, and literacy together. The Center provides tutoring for the FCAT, as well as a mentoring program for girls. The center also wants to provide a program in the future to help students and parents, with single parenting classes and a mentorship program for boys.

St. Andrews Catholic Church provides a number of programs for its students, some of which cannot be provided to the community as a whole; however, Pre-K and after-school programs are available. There are many scholarships available to help a child attend the school and take advantage of other opportunities.

6.21 Resources Identified

Pine Hills Community Performing Arts Center
St. Andrew Catholic Church
Worship Center
Pine Hills Community Center
YMCA
Boys and Girls Club
Central Florida Urban League
Silver Star Community Park
Barnett Park – Parks and Recreation
Youth Central



6.3 Food and Clothing

St. Andrew Catholic Church is the only organization interviewed that directly provides some food and clothing on site. Other organizations interviewed serve as a resource to point people in the right direction. Some organizations do not have the capacity to point individuals in the direction of food and clothing resources. St. Andrew Catholic Church partners with Holy Family Catholic Church to hold clothing drives, specifically for students. The organizations also provide school supplies to children in need.

6.31 Resources Identified



Holy Family Catholic Church
St Vincent Depot
Pine Hills Community Church-Noble Center
St Andrew Catholic Church and School
Boys and Girls Club
YMCA – Clothing
Pine Hills Community Center
Central Florida Urban League
Bread of Life Fellowship, Inc.

6.4 Parent Employability Skills

One of the most current and main sources when it comes to job opportunities, placements, employability skills and tools is the Jobs Partnership of Florida. Last year was the first year of the Jobs Partnerships and last fall was the first graduating class in the Pine Hills

area. The program emphasizes the employability of adults. The First Baptist Church of Central Florida was the leading resource provider for the classes held and will continue to be a leader for the Jobs Partnership organization, including funding. Classes are held two nights a week and have a capacity of about fifty people. The program has a high graduation rate, out of any job partnership in the past for Central Florida, according to Myra Johnson. This would be the one class for adults in the area in regards to employment skills.

6.41 Resources Identified



Haitian Resource Center Boys and Girls Club Jobs Partnerships of Florida House of Prayer and Praise
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6.5 Challenges

When talking about the gaps in needs and services that are required and needed in the Pine Hills area, they are not going away any time soon. The interview with Myra Johnson, secretary of Kingdom Network and Empowering Communities (K.N.E.C.), showed us that organizations surrounding the community of Pine Hills are moving towards a unified goal. This has been a significant problem that has been addressed these last few years, and the unity is only getting stronger. K.N.E.C is a faith-based organization made up of consortiums of churches and concerned citizens. Every month there is a meeting of pastors of surrounding faith organizations which are members of K.N.E.C. This organization serves as central information center for faith-based organizations, and also the central hub for the web networking of the faith-based organization surrounding the Pine Hills area. This is a right step towards the ultimate goals of the community of Pine Hills. There has been great satisfaction with Evans High School being built through such an economic recession, and serving as a strong foundation for the whole community. This serves as a strong foundation and as a symbol that the whole community of people that live and work in Pine Hills, surrounding businesses and other stakeholders, can pull together for the same goal; thus lot of progress being made.

6.51 Gaps Identified:

- Immigration issues
- Single parenting classes needed
- Transportation
- City/county boundaries
- Larger issues identified, leaving no time to focus on Pine Hills
- Economics

- Working together
- Safety

A web of networking between faith-based organizations has been established in the Pine Hills area. To have a successful and nourished partnership between each other, K.N.E.C. has regular monthly meetings. This keeps them in touch with each other and makes it easier to see what is going on in the Pine Hill area.

7. Government Interviews

7.1 Interviews

Fred Brummer, Orange County District 2 Commissioner
 Jason Reynolds, Principal Planner, Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization Division
 Lavon Williams, Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization Division, Orange County
 Lonnie C. Bell, Jr., Orange County Family Services Department
 Gary Siplin, District 19 Florida State Senator



During the initial interview, Commissioner Brummer answered all questions as “refer to other agencies” which are directly funded from Orange County operating funds. These organizations are the housing office, neighborhood services and family services. Neighborhood services works with groups to find resources available to fill the group’s needs, and family services caters to individual needs. Levon Williams is the head of the Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization Division. Lonnie Bell is the head of the Family Service Department. An overarching theme of the interviews was the government’s apparent focus on the revitalization and redevelopment of the Pine Hills community. The depressed real estate market and lack of transportation services were identified as key issues for the community. With respect to service delivery the following resources were identified:

7.2 After-School Programs

In addition to offering a range of programs, the Hal P. Marston and Pine Hills Community Centers offer community rooms to host various meetings and events for local residents. Orange County Government also supports the After School Zone program. This program engages middle school students from Meadowbrooke Middle School and Robinswood Middle School in career development activities from 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Orange County lacks the funding to introduce a similar program at Evans High School; however, Ms. Bell would like to open up a dialogue between Orange County Government and Evans Community School to discuss best practices about this type of program.

Lavon Williams stated that Orange County Government helps address the safety concerns of students by providing off-duty deputies to patrol around Evans Community School between 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. According to Senator Siplin, Orange County Sheriff Jerry Demings placed a sub-station next to Evans High School to address safety issues. The officers aggressively patrol the area to ward off crime.

7.3 Food Resources

Senator Siplin mentioned a challenge for students and families from Pine Hills to gain access to fresh fruit and vegetables. He too used the term “food desert” to describe Pine Hills. Senator Siplin mentioned that Florida is looking at providing incentives to supermarkets such as Publix and Winn Dixie to build in the area. He did not elaborate on what incentive that would be for them to build.

Lavon Williams from Orange County Government’s Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization Division also mentioned that Florida is looking at providing incentives to supermarkets such as Publix and Winn Dixie to build in the area. She did not elaborate on the details of those incentives either.

Lonnie Bell, Jr. from Orange County Government’s Family Services Department identified the Neighborhood Center for Family (NCF) as the nerve center for Family Services in the Pine Hills area. The NCF operates a small food bank to help those in immediate need and connects community members to the Second Harvest Food Bank. The Hal P. Marston and Pine Hills Community Centers also partner with local nonprofits and the faith-based community to provide food to those in need.

7.31 Resources Identified

Neighborhood Center for Family
Second Harvest Food Bank
Hal P. Martin Community Center
Pine Hills Community Center

7.4 Clothing Resources

District 19 Florida State Senator Gary Siplin indicated that a portion of the budget was allocated to provide thousands of jackets and socks for children who lack proper cold weather attire. He also referenced a drive for the kids of Stonewall Jackson. More than 4,000 jackets and socks were distributed to children in need.

The Hal P. Marston and Pine Hills Community Centers are funded by Orange County Government and offer a range of programs and services to residents in the Pine Hills community.

These community centers partner with local nonprofits and the faith-based community to provide clothing to those in need.

7.41 Resources Identified

Pine Hills Community Centers
Hal P. Martin Community Center

7.5 Parent Employability and Skills

Orange County Government funds the Hal P. Marston and Pine Hills Community Centers. These community centers offer parent training and GED programs. Orange County Government also funds the Neighborhood Center for Family (NCF). The NCF provides information to the community about training services offered and has many partnerships with local faith-based organizations. The NCF also runs the Haitian Outreach program to aid the Haitian community of Pine Hills.

7.51 Resources Identified

Neighborhood Center for Family
Pine Hill Community Centers
Haitian Outreach Program
Hal P. Martin Community Center

7.6 Challenges

Many students and families have limited access to existing programs and services due to lack of transportation. Senator Siplin identified Lynx as an important stakeholder to address this issue. He said that Lynx is looking at rearranging routes in an effort to accommodate the students that need transportation for after-school programs. Senator Siplin stated that he is working to subsidize the cost of public transportation through vouchers or discounts for students who cannot afford the transportation expense. He will have an answer on the progress in the future.

Another challenge identified within the Pine Hills area stems from the high-level of displaced homeowners in the community. Senator Siplin mentioned some families living in Pine Hills are currently living in cars due to the housing crisis. Orange County government has developed a new program that is funded by a \$60 million neighborhood stabilizer grant from the federal government. The program is called the Neighborhood Stabilization Program. The county put the program into action by redeveloping over 400 units at the “Seville Place Apartments”.

The apartments will be offered to the open market at a regular rental rate, and low-income families, section 8 recipients, and senior citizens at a discount rate.

8. Implications and Recommendations

8.1 Food and Clothing

- **Mobile Kitchen:**
 - Establish a Mobile Kitchen open outside of school hours
 - Potential partnerships: Second Harvest, USDA, 100 Women Strong

- **Cooking Classes:**
 - Create partnerships with nonprofit and private organizations that provide education on culinary skills
 - Potential Partnerships: Disney Foundation, Universal Studios Foundation, Second Harvest Food Bank

- **Community Garden**
 - Create a community garden on location so that students can engage in productive after-school activity, learn about the importance of eating healthy and sustainable agriculture, and increase access to fresh produce for students
 - Potential Partnerships: Real Men Outdoors, 4-H, USDA, Second Harvest Food Bank

- **Increased Healthy Lunch Options**
 - Offer larger portions of healthy food at lunch for students
 - Establish a “*Healthy Food Week*” each month or one “*Healthy Food Day*” each week to highlight healthy eating choices for students.
 - Potential partnerships: USDA, Orange County, Second Harvest Food Bank

- **On-campus Clothing Bank**
 - Create an on-campus “needs-based” clothing bank so that students can donate and/or receive unwanted (gently used) clothing.
 - Potential Partnerships: Goodwill, Evans Project

- **Directory of Resources**
 - Create a directory of food and clothing resources available to all students and parents
 - Potential Partnerships: The Evans Project

8.2 After-School and Educational Programs

- **Outside Organization Collaborations**
 - Create partnerships between local nonprofit organizations and on-campus organizations, after-school programs can be established that increase membership for on-campus organizations.
 - Potential Partnerships: 4-H, Second Harvest Food Bank, U.S. Olympic Committee, Youth Build, Orlando Magic Foundation
- **Increased College Preparation**
 - Provide more avenues for college preparation through field trips and presentations provided by UCF students and faculty
 - Potential Partnerships: Goodwill, UCF
- **Student Organization Directory**
 - Create a directory of extracurricular organizations to distribute to students

8.3 Parent Employability Skills

- **Skills Training**
 - Partner with nonprofit organizations, parents can take advantage of free computer and vocational skills training as well as home repair skills. Local organizations could offer access to computer labs so that parents can work on resumes
 - Potential Partnership: Goodwill, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando, Jobs Partnership of Central Florida, Charity & Love, Inc.
- **Multi-language Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) Meetings**
 - Offer PTSA meetings in multiple languages so that more parents can attend. Present information/directory of area organizations that offer vocational skills and resources

8.4 Meta-Issues

These are issues that can help ensure future partnerships are successfully developed and enacted.

- **Evans as a Community Convener**
 - As an established community convener, Evans can serve as a central hub for local nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and government organizations to come together to discuss community issues.
 - These meetings should be transparent in partnership development and discussion.
 - Extend invitations to community members and making meeting minutes public, trust can be established between community members and government agencies. Additionally, the organizations involved can hear first-hand accounts of issues within the community.

- **Community Liaison**
 - Add a Community Liaison position to the Student Leadership Council, students will be better informed of the resource options that surround them.
 - The responsibilities of this position will include: conducting research on organizations and agencies that may benefit Evans, providing students with an organizational directory, creating an outreach committee to help spread awareness of these organizations to students and present at PTSA meetings.

- **Increased PTSA Turnout**
 - Invite representatives from nonprofit, faith-based, and governmental organizations to speak at PTSA meetings.
 - Offer PTSA meetings in multiple languages so that more parents can attend.
 - Ask students to showcase information, parents will be encouraged to attend.
 - These meetings will incorporate the ideas of students, faculty, parents, and community organizations
 - Create student liaison between students and community services

- **Focus on organizational ties beyond interpersonal**
 - Use Memoranda of Understanding

- **Build trust with partnering and community organizations**
 - Be consistent and keep commitments
 - Publish and promote personal stories of success

- **Bridge language barrier by leveraging existing resources**
 - Facilitate connection between agencies that provide services in different languages

8.5 Other Ideas

- Evans develop communications plan for outreach re: services available
- Invite organizations to come out to PTSA or other community meeting
- Evans as convener and hub to bring organizations together across government, nonprofit, and faith-based
 - Engage specific agencies to address challenges across service areas (e.g. sheriff's office to address safety concerns; Lynx to address transportation)
- Establish sub-networks like KNEC in each and across sectors
- Add a position on Student Leadership Council to liaison between community organizations and students
- Evans to partner with Bike Share program for students and parents
- Provide Lynx bus passes to all students (look at bus routes and times), or partner with faith organizations to provide shuttles for students

- Create collaboration with Goodwill, establish a voucher program much like the one used by faith based organizations

9. Conclusion

These recommendations offer opportunities for the Evans Community School to work with nonprofit, faith-based and governmental organizations to better meet the needs of students and families in the Pine Hills community. The interviews and the surveys focused on identifying services in the areas of food and clothing for students and families, after-school recreational and educational services for students, and skill development services for parents to better prepare them for the job market. Additional challenges to delivery of these services were also recognized through the interview and survey process. It is important for some of community leaders to work together to develop solutions to some of the meta-issues identified through this process. Improving transportation, safety and economic stability in the community will be critical in determining the success of the Evans Community School project.

10. Participants from the University of Central Florida

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11. Participants from Evans High School –Student Leadership Council

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