

Office of Neighborhood Involvement Neighborhood Small Grants Program Final Report

SWNI Schools Committee

Sharing Our Family Stories

Will Fuller, committee chair

wwfuller@teleport.com 503-764-5501 or 503-246-2328

3824 SW Canby St, Portland, OR 97219-1543

Grant amount: \$985

Report submitted: 12/31/2010

I. Introduction

1. Our goal

This project was to celebrate the varied backgrounds of the people living in Southwest Portland. Inspired by a remarkable 8th-grade program at our middle schools, it centered around an evening of dialogue between students and a variety of community members. The tone and theme was that we all, no matter our color or culture, are simply, and magnificently, human, and we each have a story to tell, enriched and seasoned by our innate uniqueness.

Students at Robert Gray and Jackson Middle Schools do an 8th-grade Spring project where they study the background of one member of their family, a relative or ancestor. Each student investigates the person in depth: family links, ethnic background, religion, immigration routes, how they lived, and highlights of their life. The students then share written and oral reports in class, and document their findings in a table display with text and pictures from that person's life

Specific activities:

- **Publicity:** We distributed 500 fliers in the Hillsdale and Multnomah areas, got a front-page article in the SWNI newspaper and a column in the Southwest Connection paper. There was no commercial media coverage of the event, however, though we had invited the local papers and *Oregonian*. We decided against video at the event, to avoid raising anxiety for people sharing themselves in potentially sensitive areas.
- **Special outreach:** We approached low-income housing developments, religious organizations, senior centers, and each neighborhood association, to get diverse participation by the larger community, especially to build interest of those who don't have children in school. We distributed fliers at Hillsdale Terrace low-income project, the Headwaters senior housing, Neighborhood House and the Multnomah Senior Center. Every religious congregation in the SWNI area was emailed an invitation, and fliers were dropped off at most of them.
- **An evening dialogue** at the Multnomah Art Center, where students and members of the community shared their stories, was the main event. This event, facilitated by professionals from Resolutions Northwest, was the most costly part of the project and required the most planning.
 - A light supper of wraps, fruits, cookies and assorted beverages was provided.

- Student projects were displayed around the walls.
 - To start off the evening, SWNI Board chair Brian Russell welcomed the participants, Resolutions NW outlined the evening, and a few students gave brief oral reports.
 - The main part of the evening was table dialogues at tables of 6 to 8 people, with 1 or 2 students, 4 to 5 community members and a trained facilitator. Community members and students shared stories about someone in their family background.
 - The evening ended with a table reps sharing comments with all, and stickers were put on a world map showing the 19 countries and 17 states represented in the stories.
2. The main intended outcome was to introduce a wide range of SWNI neighbors to the 8th-Grade culture projects, and the students and neighbors to the diversity in the SWNI population. The project also was a pilot for learning cross-cultural effectiveness in a natural, first-person sharing dialogue, to help reduce the isolation that people of different cultures can feel when there are only a few of them in a neighborhood.
 3. Our goals were the same throughout the project, although at one point we debated whether to share a possibly-controversial introductory story about the insensitive treatment a particular neighbor of color. We shared it, in a non-sensational tone, as an example of the depth of the issues behind the stories.
 4. Roadblocks were few, fortunately. Thanks to the skilled facilitation of Resolutions Northwest and logistical expertise of the SWNI staff, the actual event went smoothly. **Preparation**, however, **at the schools**, was not as good as it could have been at times because we did not communicate directly or soon enough with the teachers and students. School staff were very cooperative, however. In future we will be more direct and start earlier. The **initial part of the evening** was confusing to some students, so we need to be more specific and structured about the preparation, including training sessions at the school ahead of time. Though we prepared for **childcare**, none was needed. We were also concerned about needing **translation**. Some Somali-speaking neighbors were invited but could not come, and the Somali Association would have provided translators for them.
 5. We had no other grants during 2009-10 grant cycle.
 6. This was our first SWNI small grant.

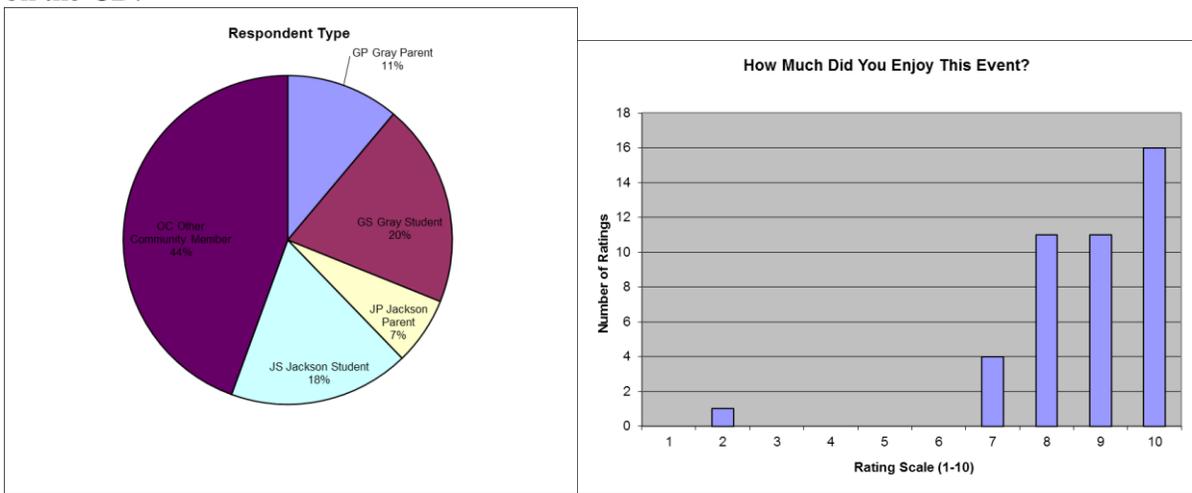
II. Measuring Success

7. How did you measure success (data showing the number of people attending your event, the number of new people, the number of people who heard about your event from your flier, survey data or some other form of measure)? Please specify what measures you chose and why you chose them? Please include any numbers, data tables, graphs, etc. If you collected qualitative information (i.e. stories) please include them in this section.

We **counted attendance**, gave out a **rating sheet** at the event and did **in-person follow-up interviews at the schools**. While we intended to do a follow-up in the Fall, there were not

enough sign-in names with contact info to do that. These measures were chosen to be practical with a small, all-volunteer team at a one-time event. Seventy-five people took part in the event, including students, parents, other residents, SWNI staff and facilitators from Resolutions Northwest. Everyone joined the table discussion. There was an even balance of participants, with about half being students and their families and half from the general community. It was a full house; in fact, some participants noted that the tables were so close together that noise was an occasional problem.

Ratings: 45 participants filled out a rating form at the event. The main information is shown below. In short, the event was very well received, but with room for improvement. One student said, with stars in her eyes, “I came to find cross-age bonding ... and I found it!” Detailed results, including written comments and the form itself, are in separate documents on the CD.



Informal community feedback, comments after the event, were positive and encouraging.

Student feedback at school: Students generally enjoyed the event, and would like to do something similar again. Concerns were around initial organization and the facilitation at a few of the tables. One principal reported that he had checked in with the students when they returned to school and found them universally enthusiastic, which impressed him as a person well-acquainted with middle-school cynicism and candid criticism.

Questions asked of students at Gray (4/27/10) and Jackson (5/11/10) Middle Schools
(Responses are also in SOFS-Spring Student Feedback.doc)

What did you learn?

Gray:

The community stays separate unless they come together.
New stories.
How you feel.

Jackson:

Other people’s cultures, standpoints, beliefs, daily lives.
The community learned about cultures, diversity of who’s here.
Even people who were not prepared had interesting stories.

Showed how open people in our community were, e.g. religions.
Find out how everybody got here, not just on the surface.

What should be changed in the event?

Gray:

Better organized in the beginning.
More decoration, e.g. flags.
Better advertised.
Share [student] speeches, not just stories.
Have more time.

Jackson:

Invite more kids, even if not to share.
Outline of what to say – topics more guided.
More organization.
Prepare adults what to expect.
Each table report in more detail – themes.
Spread out tables to reduce noise.

Ideas for other events?

Gray:

[specifically] Old people, contact senior centers.
Group go to community places to start out [smaller events]
or go to big one.
Invite other kids who didn't get picked.
Invite high school students.

Jackson:

Series of meetings.
Picnic potluck – food from other cultures.

Comments on Adult Facilitation? (at Jackson only)

Didn't actually control, but people took turns, had time to speak.
[Need] More control of where conversation went – flow of conversation.
Were respectful, listened to what we said.
Bring up opinions, react to them, e.g. religion – discuss, not argue.

III. Capacity and Sustainability

8. Have you made any efforts to make your future projects self-sustainable? If so, what?
-How will you use these additional funds (to either reduce your dependency on SWNI Small Grants Program or to expand your project without increasing your dependency on SWNI Small Grants Program)?

We are exploring cooperation with the Restorative Listening Project program, and have had informal conversation with Judith Mowry, but nothing further to date. Funding is an issue for something with professional facilitation, and we are looking for ways to replicate with volunteer help.

9. SWNI will be organizing a training workshop for future grant applicants. We would like past grant winners to present their projects for 5-10 minutes. Would you like the opportunity to talk about the successes and set backs of your project with other grant winners and future grant applicants?

Of course!

10. How has your project encouraged participation (i.e. more volunteers, increased visibility, more participation in neighborhood meetings, increase neighborhood activity in an renovated community space, improved access to education or skills)? Please be specific.

Frankly, the event reached relatively few people directly – less than 80 total, and about 40 community members not affiliated with schools or SWNI. There was some concern that dealing with race, religion and other sensitive issues might be controversial, so this was testing the waters and the details of such an event. After it took place, the schools committee and SWNI were energized and encouraged by the success of the event, making it easier to do similar events in the future to build greater cross-cultural effectiveness with more people.

11. Were there new organizing or outreach skills/strategies acquired by members of your organization as a result of this project? What was the most effective outreach strategy you used to get people involved?

Yes. We learned more about communicating with schools, and the importance of direct contact with the teachers and students who would participated in the event. We also learned the importance of repeated publicity to media and the general community. Our most effective outreach strategy was person-to-person contact. backing up our print and electronic outreach.

IV. Partnerships

12. Were any new partnerships created as a result of this project? Please list and describe the role of the partners.

Resolutions Northwest – facilitated group discussions. They also trained students to be table co-facilitators, advised on the flow of the event, and generally contributed expertise to the smooth functioning of a public event on sensitive subjects.

Neighborhood House – Co-sponsored, publicized at senior center and other locations.

Multnomah Historical Society – co-sponsored, provided display table and encouragement.

SWNI staff – all of whom took part in the evening event – while not a new partner, acted in a new role for the Schools Committee. They provided great logistical and moral support to this event, lending their deep experience and wide connections unstintingly.

V. Engaging under-represented groups

13. Were there any underrepresented groups/organizations you've traditionally not worked with before but did so as a result of this project? Please list those organizations and their contact information.

Some contact with Somali Association –Bashir Warsame - 503-595-0368 – but they wound up not being able to send anyone to the event. A couple of Somali neighbors came on their own.

Several of the community and student participants were members of underrepresented groups, demonstrating a greater diversity in Southwest Portland than is the stereotype.

14. **For non-Neighborhood Association groups:** As a result of this project, was there any ongoing participation with any Neighborhood Association? *i.e. did representatives from your organization attend neighborhood association meetings ,become a member, volunteer, or stay in contact with a neighborhood association?* Please describe.

No specific additional ongoing contact with NAs directly beyond discussing it in SWNI Board meetings, but event increased visibility of Schools Committee work to NAs.

15. **For Neighborhood Associations:** -- not applicable --

IV. Deliverables

16. Small Grant Photo Description List.

All photos were taken at the Sharing event on April 23, 2010 by Malik Martini, volunteer. Images are 1024 x 768 pixels. Larger images available if needed.

Other tech info is with each photo image on the CD.

- SOFS-1.jpg: The Story Team from SWNI and Resolutions Northwest
- SOFS-2.jpg: A neighbor makes a point
- SOFS-3.jpg: Story of an Adoption
- SOFS-4.jpg: A student hears from a long-term neighbor
- SOFS-5.jpg: Informal sharing at display tables
- SOFS-6.jpg: “Black” student, “White” ancestor
- SOFS-7.jpg: Stories were meaningful, personal

List of all files on the CD:

| FILE | CONTENTS |
|--------------------------------|---|
| FileList.doc | Word-format list of files and contents |
| readme.txt | Text list of files |
| SOFS-1.jpg: | The Story Team from SWNI and Resolutions Northwest |
| SOFS-2.jpg: | A neighbor makes a point |
| SOFS-3.jpg: | Story of an Adoption |
| SOFS-4.jpg: | A student hears from a long-term neighbor |
| SOFS-5.jpg: | Informal sharing at display tables |
| SOFS-6.jpg: | “Black” student, “White” ancestor |
| SOFS-7.jpg: | Stories were meaningful, personal |
| SOFS-BudgetvsActual.doc | Expense comparison – exact figures |
| SOFS-Expenses_SWNI.pdf | SWNI P&L Sheet for the project |
| SOFS-FeedbackForm.doc | Form used at event – blue paper |
| SOFS-FeedbackResults.xls | Spreadsheet of all responses from feedback form |
| SOFS-FinalReport.doc | Final Report for 2010 Sharing Our Family Stories |
| SOFS-I-Samples.doc | Letter to parents asking for sample photos, project docs |
| SOFS-ParentInfo.doc | Sent to parents describing the project and their role |
| SOFS-ParentRelease.doc | Release form for student participation |
| SOFS-PressRelease.pdf | Press Release sent to local papers |
| SOFS-Receipts.pdf | Receipts for printing, room rent, Resolutions NW initial invoice |
| SOFS-ReligEmailTemplate.doc | Sent to all congregations in SWNI area |
| SOFS-RNW-Fees-Time.doc | Resolutions NW Timesheet -- actual and invoiced |
| SOFS-SpringStudentFeedback.doc | Student responses from group interviews at school after event |
| SOFS-Tracking sheets.pdf | Tracking sheets for room rent, printers, RNW supplemental payment |



The Story Team from SWNI and Resolutions Northwest



A neighbor makes a point



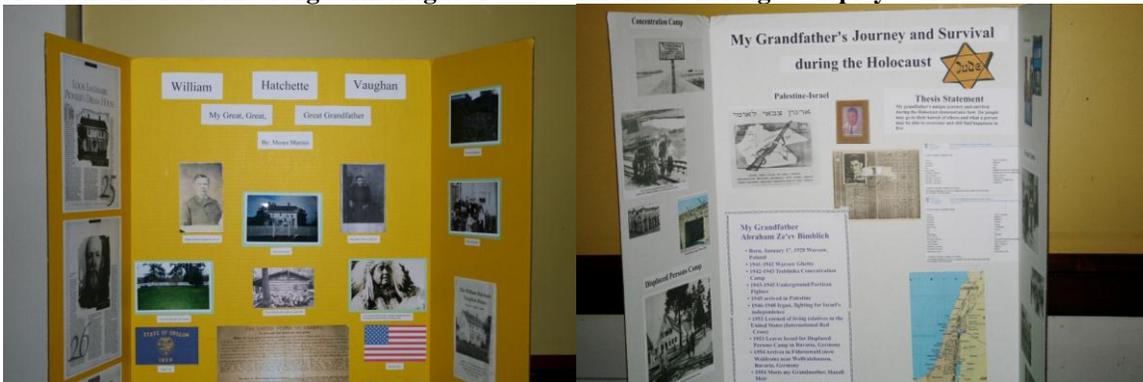
Story of an Adoption



A student hears from a long-term neighbor



Informal sharing at display tables



"Black" student, "White" ancestor

Stories were meaningful, personal

17. A copy of all deliverables: fliers, postcards, copies of web pages (if the purpose of the project was to create or improve communication through websites), etc.... We want to see what you did and how you did it.

These are on the CD as separate documents. – see list under #16 above.

V. Financial Information

18. All financial information related to this project. The expense summary should include:

- i. All receipts –
are on CD along with tracking sheets and expense summary.
- ii. Donations
Childcare room rent \$35
- iii. Number of volunteers and volunteer hours
18 volunteers, 65 hours
- iv. In kind donations by participants, project leaders and partners
None

Project Actual vs. Budget Expenses

| Item | Requested Funds | | Leveraged Funds and/or Additional Grants* | | Donated Services & Time** | |
|---|-----------------|------|---|--------|---------------------------|-------|
| | Bdgt | Actl | Bdgt | Actual | Bdgt | Actl |
| Personnel Requested: 6 hours @\$72/hr nonprofit rate 3 hr event, 3 hr prep work. Resolutions NW professional facilitation coordinator. Actual was 14 hours, of which we paid for 9 Leveraged: 30 hours @\$17/hr (10x3hrs) Resolutions NW volunteer ten table facilitators Donated: 60 hours @\$17/hr SWNI volunteers for publicity, school liaison, planning, follow-up, other support. Actual added 5 hrs prof facil at \$72/hr and 12 hrs SWNI volunteer @\$17/hr | 432 | 644 | 510 | 510 | 1,020 | 1,465 |
| Promotional Materials /Printing 500 color fliers @\$0.39 Actual 500 B&W | 195 | 18 | | | | |
| Event Related Expenses Room rent: \$80 – actual \$72 Refreshments for 60 people @\$2/ea = \$120 Actual \$133.04 Childcare: 2 x 3hr @\$18/hr = \$108 – Actual \$60 Childcare room \$35 rent donated | 308 | 265 | | | 35 | 35 |
| Permitting & Fees (Reserving park space, noise variances, capping meters, street closures, etc.) | 0 | | | | | |
| Participant Support (Travel costs, stipends, etc.) | 0 | | | | | |
| Project Materials Note-Writing materials for 60 participants | 50 | 58 | | | | |
| Additional Expenses | 0 | | | | | |
| Subtotals | 985 | 985 | 510 | 510 | 1,055 | 1,500 |
| Administration*** (Fiscal sponsorship, administrative project management, accounting) | 0 | | | | | |
| TOTALS | 985 | 985 | 510 | 510 | 1,055 | 1,500 |