

ICMA Community Health and Safety Award Nomination – Camp Power

In 2014, the City of DeKalb partnered with community agencies to create a summer program to serve children in an area of the City with a high concentration of poverty, lack of opportunity, public safety concerns, and quality of life issues. Camp Power was designed as a free summer camp offered to children living in the University Village housing development.

Problem Assessment: The Camp Power concept originated from the DeKalb Police Department's "20/20 Plan: A Vision for the Future - 20 Initiatives in 20 Months," which was adopted in December 2012. The 20/20 Plan includes programs to reduce crime, enhance delivery of public safety services, improve quality of life, improve community relations, and develop partnerships with stakeholders. One of those programs was the formation of a Youth in Need Task Force, which identified issues facing children and their families in University Village. Prior to the initiation of Camp Power, the University Village area represented the highest concentration of poverty, highest Police call volume, and the highest rate of violent crime.

Program Implementation and Costs: Camp Power was designed as a free, collaborative summer program offered on-site to children and their families living in the University Village housing development, which is comprised of 534 residential units. In its inaugural year, through a joint effort of 25 different community organizations and nearly 500 volunteers, this culturally relevant, multi-dimensional wellness program offered an academic component, daily nutritious lunch service, structured physical activities, nutrition education, layered mentoring, life skills training, family engagement activities, paid employment opportunities to parents and exposure to

a range of community resources. Police Officers, City officials and other staff participate in various programs of Camp Power. The primary expenses of Camp Power are staffing, food, academic programming, athletic equipment, field trip events, and supplies. The program takes place Monday through Friday for eight weeks of the summer, with the daily lunch service provided for all ten weeks of the summer break. Camp Power has been funded locally since its inaugural year, from a combination of local resources. Below is the funding structure:

City of DeKalb	\$5,000
University Village Management	\$10,000
Tri County Health Endowment	\$3,800
100+ Women Who Care	\$7,500
Roberts Foundation Grant (private)	\$10,000
Brigham/Proesel Donation	\$5,000
DeKalb County Community Foundation	\$6,350
Personal Donations	\$7,300
Youth Engaged in Philanthropy	\$2,500
Kishwaukee Family YMCA Contribution	\$10,000
Donated Goods	\$7,500
Total Funding	\$74,950

Tangible Results or Measurable Outcomes: Camp Power served thousands of meals, provided children with a host of educational and recreational opportunities they may have never experienced before, and also created lasting relationships. After the program’s first year, there was a 26% decrease in Part 2 crimes, and after the second year, there was a 40% reduction in overall crime, a 13% reduction in calls for service by Police, and a 49% reduction in arrests occurring at University Village. Several positive outcomes resulted from Camp Power in its first year, inspiring the continuation for the program.



2014 Outcomes:

- 130 child participants
- 26% reduction in part 2 crimes
- 96% improved Police perception
- 3,371 meals served
- 92% improved nutritional habits
- 50% increased physical activity

2015 Outcomes:

- 140 child participants
- 40% reduction in offenses
- 13% reduction in calls for service
- 48% reduction in arrests
- 2,561 meals served
- 72% improved nutritional habits
- 80% increased physical activity

After two years of data collection and a pattern of positive results, further analysis was undertaken to measure outcomes and impacts on the community. While crime rates in the city of DeKalb increased in 2016, crime rates in University Village held stable. Holding steady in spite of rising crime rates is a great success. While there is still work to be done, the neighborhood is stabilizing.

2016 Outcomes:

- 108 child participants
- 3,091 meals served
- 13 paid positions
- **Nutrition Education:** The effect nutrition education had on participants was measured through a participant survey.
- A minimum of 60 minutes a day or 55% of time active and moving

Eating Habit	Midpoint evaluation	Final evaluation
Eating more fruits	92%	97%
Eating more vegetables	71%	77%
Trying new foods	76%	77%
Asking someone to buy healthy food at home	71%	74%



- **Affective Climate:** The affective climate was assessed using two separate surveys administered to two different age groups: 5 through 8 years, and 9 years and up.

Affective indicator - ages 5-8	Midpoint evaluation	Final evaluation
Likes the program	82%	87%
Having fun	89%	92%
Made new friends	83%	96%

Affective indicator - ages 9 & up	Agree/Strongly agree
Supported by the instructors	100%
Instructors think they are important	89%
Feeling safe in the program	100%
Instructors are positive role models	89%
Want to do their best in the program	67%
Use positive values (e.g. responsibility) more because of the program	78%
Feel good about themselves in the program	56%
Make more healthy choices because of the program	100%
Help other people more because of what they learned in the program	44%

Lessons learned during Planning, Implementation, and Analysis: Since 2014, the 10-week Camp Power program has been generously funded entirely by community-based donations and grants, as well as many community stakeholders committing their staff to facilitate the program’s mission. Although Camp Power programs at University Village have been sufficiently funded, it has become apparent that other areas of the community are in need of similar programming. Extending Camp Power to other neighborhoods will involve expenses that exceed local resources. The other neighborhoods lack a singular housing complex management, so there is limited opportunity for additional funding through housing managers. Organizers determined that federal assistance in funding Camp Power will add certainty to the expansion of the program in the additional neighborhoods. Additionally, the partners determined that Camp Power’s mission is most effectively executed if the program is facilitated by a party other than the Police Department. Although the Department created the program in hopes of seeing benefits directly



related to community policing, continuing to administer Camp Power does not fall within the Department's core services. Therefore, a move to the local YMCA has been initiated. The City of DeKalb will continue to be active participants and contributors. The Police Department will provide staff, board membership and City staff/elected official volunteers.

How the Program Raises Awareness of the Contributions of Local Government Managers:

The DeKalb 2025 Strategic Plan, which included extensive community input, identified five vision statements. The first vision included in the plan is a Vision of a Sense of Place: DeKalb is proudly known as a welcoming, safe, and vibrant city offering economic, educational, social, cultural, and recreational opportunities for everyone. This vision represents the role of local government managers as expressed by the DeKalb community. Developing a city identity helps strengthen the sense of community in DeKalb. It helps bring together the city's diverse people, rich heritage, and distinctive neighborhoods. A sense of place helps foster a sense of community. This is particularly true for DeKalb's youth, who represent the future of the city. Camp Power exemplifies the role of local government managers in fostering a sense of place and facilitating positive intervention in areas of high need. This would not be possible without the combination of strong local government leadership and consistent collaboration with dedicated community partners. The Camp Power community partners include: Kishwaukee Family YMCA, City of DeKalb Police Department, Voluntary Action Center, KishHealth System/Northwestern Medicine, Northern Illinois University, University Village, Immanuel Lutheran Church, DeKalb Park District, DeKalb County Community Gardens, Girl Scouts, DeKalb Public Library, University of Illinois Extension, DeKalb Fire Department, DeKalb County Health Department, Kishwaukee College, b95-FM, and Hillcrest Covenant Church.

