

Portola Family Connections Anchor Institution Three Year Summary 2008-2011

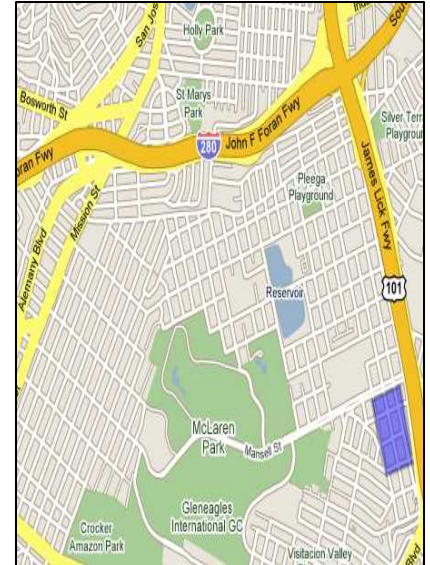


Investing in a Healthy, Thriving Portola Neighborhood

Portola Family Connections is pleased to present our Anchor Institution Initiative Plan Three Year Summary. The planning process was a great opportunity to survey our community and create a blueprint for neighborhood development. As you read through this overview, we believe you'll share our enthusiasm.

Family Connections takes a community building approach to neighborhood improvement. We define community building as continuous, self-renewing efforts by residents and professionals to engage in collective action of problem solving and enrichment that results in improved lives, greater equity, strengthened relationships, networks, institutions and assets, and new standards and expectations for life in our community.

Our primary goal through the Anchor Institution Initiative is to develop resident leadership through education on important issues that affect them and providing them with the tools and resources to create positive social change within the community. We have learned that the most effective, and long-lasting results are built over time through working *within* the community to build trust and accountability – and to help develop the ability of residents to speak for themselves, rather than speaking for them.



Map of the Portola District

A Message from the Executive Director

Portola Family Connections has been honored to be selected an Anchor Institution in San Francisco. After 8 months of extensive planning meetings, focus groups, surveys, writing, and final analysis, we are pleased to present a very authentic and detailed plan for realizing our full potential as an Anchor Institution in the Portola neighborhood. The planning process was truly an informative and enlightening journey. With our new plan in hand; we are embarking on a process for working closer with the Portola community as partner to actualize our full potential as an agent for positive social change.

We have learned from this planning process how proud Portola residents are with their neighborhood primarily because of the parks, schools, cultural diversity, and family support services that are offered. At the same time our neighbors are concerned about a range of safety issues, traffic, the public education systems and more opportunities and space for youth. Subsequently, survey and focus group respondents wanted to see Family Connections address their safety concerns, help to create more recreational services, after school services and summer programs.

I am grateful to DCYF's amazing vision, Family Connections Board of Directors, staff, and community residents that helped us to visualize a healthy, productive community that has the resources needed to thrive. It was wonderful to be affirmed as the "go to place" in the neighborhood that could make these dreams come true. I am pleased to be part of this process of learning, growing and eventually becoming a true anchor in the Portola community.

If you are interested in getting involved in the Portola Anchor Institution Initiative, or would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact us: www.portolafc.org or (415) 715-6746.

Maryann Fleming
Executive Director

What is an Anchor Institution?

Anchor Institutions are being developed and funded by the San Francisco Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) as a strategy for improving outcomes for children, youth and their families in neighborhoods throughout San Francisco by ensuring that there are strong, effective community institutions that are capable of addressing their needs at both the individual and community level.

Historically, Anchor Institutions have served as hubs for the community — providing community residents with a place to build relationships, solve community problems and engage in leadership development that will help to guide the direction of the organization and community. They help build connections that enrich the neighborhood, and build the social capital of residents and community as a whole.

Courtesy of the Department of Children, Youth and Families, City and County of San Francisco website.

Overview of Strengths & Areas for Improvement in the Portola Neighborhood

Out of the Anchor Institution Planning Process we developed goals that incorporated people’s concerns and met the objectives of the Anchor Institution. Our overarching goal for the Anchor Institution is to empower the people of our community to create the safe and connected community they want.

We collected a total of 384 surveys, facilitated 8 focus groups and in addition, Executive Director Maryann Fleming met one-on-one with Leah Rowell, Office Assistant, Senator Leland Yee’s Office, Supervisor Sophie Maxwell from District 10, and Supervisor Tom Ammiano from District 9.

The surveys were very enlightening. They highlighted both what people liked about our neighborhood and where we should seek improvement. The vast majority (91%) of respondents reported that they “like living in the Portola neighborhood,” and only 10% have plans to move out of the neighborhood in the next year or two.

The following is a snapshot from the surveys and focus groups that helps to provide a sense of the concerns and strengths of the Portola neighborhood.

Areas of Strength:

The Strengths of the Portola Neighborhood are:	Adult Residents	Youth Residents	Portola Community Organizations	Portola Businesses	City Officials & Agencies
# 1 Strength	Schools/ Educational System	People	Cultural Diversity	Cultural Diversity	Family Support and Resources
#2 Strength	After-school and Summer Programs	Palega Park	Parks	Restaurants	Cultural Diversity
#3 Strength	Family Support and Resources	Safety	Schools/ Educational System	Traffic	Cost of Living

Areas for Improvement:

Areas that Need Improvement in the Portola Neighborhood are:	Adult Residents	Youth Residents	Portola Community Organizations	Portola Businesses	City Officials & Agencies
# 1 Area for Improvement	Safety	Neighborhood Beautification	After-school and Summer Programs	Safety	Safety
#2 Area for Improvement	Schools/ Educational System	Safety	Opportunities for Youth	Traffic	After-school and Summer Programs
#3 Area for Improvement	After-school and Summer Programs	More Opportunities and Spaces for Youth	Safety	Neighborhood Beautification	Traffic



Goals for the Next Three Years

Our Goals Through the 3-Year Anchor Institution Initiative Are To:

- Strengthen Family Connections' Infrastructure to build and sustain our social justice agenda, programs and services through which our staff and community can develop and implement new forms of community leadership, advocacy, and movement building,
- Build The Capacity of Family Connections' Participants, Services, & Portola Community Members to understand and participate in local advocacy and policy making that directly affects their unmet needs through education, training and direct community organizing
- Network Residents, Neighborhood Organizations, and City Planners to build partnerships to implement a comprehensive, community-based plan for the Portola neighborhood.
- Work Collaboratively with Partner Organizations to systemically promote a community defined framework of equitable development for the Portola neighborhood.
- Strengthen Family Connections' Role as A Change Agent that helps to ensure that the Portola Neighborhood has the community capital and resources to thrive and provide the best support possible for all its diverse families/community members.

Portola Family Connections: Action Steps

Year One 2008-2009:

- Implement Anchor Institution Initiative Plan
- Anchor Institution Kick-Off and Community Awareness Campaign
- Renovate Family Connections Garage to add the annex, which will create more community space
- Research/Conduct Cost Analysis of the Benefits identified by Staff/Determine time-lime for adopting these
- Provide Staff with training, coaching and travel to conferences in critical areas where need is identified
- Hire an evaluation consultant to create a comprehensive qualitative and quantitative evaluation model and customized password-secured database that links all of Family Connections' programs
- Hire a Development Director
- Develop Annual Fund Development Plan
- Launch New Website
- Continue to follow up with established community relationships

Year Two 2009-2010:

- Create a Family Connections Anchor Institution Coordinator position
- Hire Part Time Data Entry Person
- Coordinate efforts to connect schools and Palega Park Rec Center to address youth development in the community
- Work to create more direct connections between existing community networks and Family Connections participants

Year Three 2010-2011:

- Continue to expand our relationships with residents through the families we already serve
- Continue to further connect Family Connections participants to established community networks
- Continue to network with our community to reach a broader segment of our community
- Establish a parent mentorship program
- Resident Leadership and Organizing Classes and Internships
- Youth Leadership and Organizing Internships
- Develop a plan for sustainability beyond the initial 3 years of the Anchor Institution Initiative
- Fundraise to support Anchor Institution Initiative beyond the initial 3 years

***These are abbreviated Action Steps; for a more complete listing, please visit our website: www.portolafc.org**

Our Long-Term Goals for the Portola District

Our Vision of The Long-Term (4 Years+) Impact On The Portola Community:

- A solid, collective *social justice framework that supports new forms of community leadership, advocacy, and movement building.
- Community members will have the capacity and tools to fully understand and participate in local advocacy and policy making that directly affects their unmet needs through education and training and direct community organizing;
- Residents, community organizations, and city planners are networked and working together to effectively address community concerns.
- The Portola community is systemically promoting a community-defined framework for equitable development.
- The Portola neighborhood has the community capital and resources to thrive and provide the best support possible for all its diverse families/ community members.

* What is Social Justice?

Social justice refers to the concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely the administration of law. It is a world, which affords ALL individuals and groups fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of society, including, but not limited to: neighborhood safety; high quality, affordable education; high quality, affordable health care; and safe, clean affordable housing.



Family Connections Role As A Change Agent

Because our community is largely low-moderate income, immigrants of color, our engagement strategies encourage the civic participation of newcomers. It is our intention to build the human, social, institutional and community capital of residents and community organizations through exposure to leadership development, organizing, networking, and bridge building. Family Connections has a three-pronged approach to building the capacity of these stakeholders to participate, thereby strengthening and legitimizing the public discourse that shapes the future of our community.

Our first strategy is to provide exposure, education, and training within our existing community networks to develop resident leadership on issues such as safety, education, and after-school programs.

Our second strategy is to provide organizing support that empowers residents and contributes to the social cohesion of the community.

Our third strategy is to network and connect residents to other community based organizations and public officials.

Family Connections is working to strengthen and enhance the ability of the Portola's community-based infrastructure to attract more resources for community building work, and of course, influence public policy decisions, identify and nurture new leadership among residents and build relationships and social capital that can foster collective action for community improvement.

For more information about Family Connections or the Anchor Institution Initiative please contact us:

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