



## Social Venture Partners Portland Investee Final Report

**Investee:** Child Care Improvement Project at Neighborhood House

**Investee Contact:** Marilyn Goodman

**SVPP Lead Partner:** Bill Porter

**Investment Period:** Fall 2006 – Spring 2009

**Annual Operating Budget:** (approx \$525,000 for CCIP; \$3.9 million for Neighborhood House)

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### Investee Mission and Vision:

Recognizing that stable, high-quality child care remains a critical challenge for low-income families in Oregon—and that family home-based child care options are often the most economical choice for these families even as these providers vary dramatically in quality—SVPP seeks to strengthen the capacity, effectiveness and reach of the Child Care Improvement Project. Unique in the Portland metro area, CCIP creates and supports networks of home-based child care providers to help these providers improve the quality of their services, child and parent interactions, and environments and the success of their businesses. CCIP is a project of Neighborhood House.

Specifically, the Child Care Improvement Project envisions:

- Increasing the number of quality family (or home-based) child care opportunities by helping providers operate successful businesses and increase earnings from child care, master effective child development strategies, and strengthen connections to parents and communities.
- Increasing the percentage of children whose child care experiences prepare them to achieve their full potential through readiness for school.
- Increasing the number of parents who build strong partnerships with their child care providers, which enable them to work with confidence and security.
- Supporting effective child care public policy at the state and local level which supports parents' ability to maintain employment, their children's ability to achieve their full potential, and the retention of quality child care providers.
- Securing increased state childcare subsidies for low-income families by demonstrating improved child outcomes from increased subsidies.

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### SVPP Investment and Objective:

#### SVPP-Assisted Programs and Objectives

- CCIP will continue to show results improving home-based child care programs in the Portland area—by wisely investing money from SVPP to improve its overall effectiveness and capacity.
- CCIP will clarify its parameters and plans for future growth—with support and advice from SVPP partners who will help analyze the marketplace, different models for growth and CCIP's viability.
- CCIP will expand its clients' presence and marketability on the Internet, as Neighborhood House undertakes a revision of its website—with support and advice from SVPP partners who can bring their knowledge about new tools and platforms.



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### CCIP Client Outcomes:

- 25% of providers will show improved scores in at least 5 of the 6 categories on the

### CCIP quality rating scale.

- 25% percent of providers will show an increase in income.
- 50% of providers will have made 2 improvements in how they operate their business.
- 60% of parents responding to CCIP's parent survey will indicate they are extremely or very satisfied with their child care.

### **Results & Accomplishments:**

- Expanded existing network of SE Portland child care providers to include 5 Clackamas County providers
- Tested a new network to serve Vietnamese community child care providers (although the network ultimately was not sustainable)
- Strengthened CCIP's communications and marketing capacity, by creating a marketing plan for driving new referrals to CCIP providers, providing "message positioning" advice to CCIP's parent organization (Neighborhood House) and creating an online listserv for providers to share information
- Improved facilities/environment of 2 CCIP child care providers

### **Volunteer Partners/Friends of SVPP and their Key Contributions:**

Because of the nature of this investment—where capacity building of the organization wasn't an explicit investment goal till Year 3—team leader Bill Porter provided nearly all of the in-kind contribution time to this project, playing primarily a coaching and coordination role in the first two years. However, SVPP partners played important roles at key points:

- Eli Lamb and Bill Swindells helped shape and conceptualize the original investment proposal and approach.
- Eli Lamb and Steve Rosenbaum provided counsel on technology and communications issues and plans.
- Julie Young helped plan and organize a well attended SVPP quarterly meeting in 2008 showcasing early education issues and CCIP's role
- Brittany Sims (lead writer), Mary Edmeades, Len Schulwitz and Libbi Loseke Winter participated actively in a communications task force that resulted in a detailed plan to guide marketing activities at CCIP.
- A dozen volunteers participated in work projects to help improve facilities of CCIP child care providers; Carol Finney played a key role organizing and planning these projects in summer 2008.



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### Total Impact:

Category	Q2, 2009	Since Inception
Value of volunteer hours from partners and friends	\$4,200	\$25,355
SVPP direct financial contributions (grants)	\$0	\$90,000
Indirect contributions – donations from partners, friends, businesses, co-investments, in-kind because of introduction by SVPP	\$0	\$20,000
Projected operational impact from SVPP-supported projects/initiatives	\$0	\$
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$135,355</b>

### Summary:

CCIP is a well functioning initiative with clear goals, a proven business plan, stable funding and a passionate and well respected director. Just as important, it has clearly articulated what it is trying to accomplish and it works with an evaluator to perform an annual assessment of its impact—and this evaluation shows it is making a tangible difference in improving family-based child care in the Portland area. However, SVPP’s efforts to improve on these existing strengths—to improve the effectiveness of CCIP—have been only modest.

Originally, the SVPP investment was predicated on a big idea—that we could perhaps leverage Portland’s larger Children’s Investment Fund—but exactly *what* the project was that SVPP and CHIF funding would support was not clearly articulated. And then, shortly after we decided to work with CCIP, CHIF put its matching grants program on hold. So SVPP moved forward focusing more narrowly on helping CCIP replicate its network to serve an additional ethnic community of providers ( growing from nine to 10) and on bringing Clackamas County providers into another network.

In originally presenting this investment to the board in 2006, the Investment Team explained the project was still worth doing even without CHIF dollars—but, in this diminished form, we struggled over the three-year investment period to maximize our leverage and articulate what SVPP was uniquely contributing. Indeed, for most of the investment period, what CCIP most valued was our cash investment and SVPP performed like any other grantmaker: We supported the good work of an effective change agent, but we didn’t necessarily make it a *more effective* organization.

Over the first two years of the investment, we worked primarily to support CCIP as it sought to create a new network targeted at the Vietnamese community; because of the nature of this work, our support was mostly in the form of cash (our annual investment) and there were few volunteer opportunities to better leverage the talent and knowledge of the partnership. During this period, partners were primarily engaged as volunteers at “work parties” for CCIP providers and as participants in a well-attended quarterly partner meeting on early care issues in Oregon. In addition, we provided some basic IT advice by creating a listserve for CCIP providers and creating a separate website URL for CCIP.



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Recognizing our investment wasn't leveraging what we had hoped, at the end of Year 2 we worked with CCIP to refocus our investment toward better supporting capacity-building and away from supporting a particular programmatic strategy (ultimately, CCIP decided the Vietnamese community network was not sustainable and it disbanded the fledgling effort in summer 2008). This renewed focus on capacity-building reflected our interest in ensuring we were leaving CCIP in a stronger position after we completed our three-year investment and it dove-tailed with the priorities of SVPP's new strategic plan.

During summer 2008, CCIP identified two specific capacity-building priorities: market test the demand for CCIP services (to help inform future decisions about replicating networks) and support communications efforts (primarily boosting its web presence). As the recession deepened in late 2008, CCIP requested that we instead focus on just communications efforts and on helping it sustain/support its existing networks and providers. In spring 2009, SVPP organized a communications task force to help research, refine and write a marketing plan for CCIP whose goal is driving more parent traffic to CCIP providers.

### **Investee Comments:**

From Marilyn Goodman:

On behalf of the CCIP child care providers and myself we are extremely grateful for having the opportunity to be an investee of SVPP. We received services that if calculated on a monetary level would have been out of reach for us.

Having volunteers create a sustainable garden space that is providing nutritious food for children and their families was definitely a highlight. The provider who had her outdoor deck re-stained commented to me the other day that having this done by the volunteers was a catalyst for finishing the rest of her backyard projects that have led to a safer and functional space for the children. We received some needed technical help in getting our listserve up and running and it has served as an effective communication tool for CCIP staff and providers to share useful information about events, services, advocacy activities, child care needs of parents, and donated goods. We were also able to set up our website under Neighborhood House using a separate name that makes it much easier to include in our marketing materials. And lastly, the efforts and time donated by the volunteers on our marketing plan has been so helpful for me as I continue my outreach efforts in the community.

I have learned a lot from our relationship with SVPP and have been so pleased with the outcome of our 3 year partnership.