



Social Venture Partners Portland Investee Final Report

Investee: Metropolitan Family Service
Investee Contact: Krista Larson
SVPP Lead Partner: Rupa Jack
Investment Period: Q1 '03 – Q3 '05
Annual Operating Budget: \$4,930,426
Final Report

Investee Mission and Vision:

Metropolitan Family Service (MFS) is dedicated to building stronger communities by providing services, connecting people with resources, and offering volunteer opportunities throughout the Portland area. It is a single agency with many programs serving many people. The mission of MFS is to strengthen families and individuals while enhancing their participation in community life.

SVPP Investment and Objective:

Social Venture Partners Portland has awarded MFS \$40,000 in 2003 and \$36,200 in 2004 towards the introduction and enhancement of "Make Parenting A Pleasure" (MPAP) program (a program that consists of a series of classes that focus on the basics of parenting, including anger management, nutrition, and educational involvement). In 2005, SVPP awarded a grant of \$25,000 to support MFS strategic, technology-related initiatives (agency database, intranet, and file naming protocol projects). With the transition of the MPAP program to other funding sources and the completion of the technology-related initiatives our engagement with MFS is complete. The total investment SVPP has made to MFS over the three years is \$101,200.

Investment Accomplishments:

MAKE PARENTING A PLEASURE

A total of 28 Make Parenting A Pleasure classes were conducted, serving 268 parents. Outcomes measuring Make Parenting A Pleasure (MPAP) participant change were tracked using standardized pre and post program evaluation tools. Participant pretest scores were measured in recruitment home visits before the 13-week program session begins and post-test scores were measured immediately following completion of the 13-week program session. Success to date:

1. Results have shown 100% of the participant population demonstrated an increase in observable and self-reported change in this outcome area.
2. 95% of parents enrolled in Make Parenting a Pleasure program services demonstrated an increase in participation in their children's early childhood development and learning.
3. 71% of parents demonstrated an increase in involvement in children's out of home learning.
4. Using the scores of the pre and post-tests, 98% of graduating parents report a reduction in their stress levels.
5. With the support of SVPP funding MPAP has been translated into Spanish, and Russian.
6. With support from additional funders, including United Way, Multnomah County, Mt. Hood Community College Early Head Start, and federal funds from 21st Century Community Learning Centers allocated through the State of Oregon's Department of Education, Make Parenting A Pleasure is continuing as an important program for families in our community.



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DATABASE AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

- A database consultant has been selected for the database project. The scope of work has been defined and execution of contract is well underway. MFS has identified and designated staff and organized data for the consultant. Completion of the study is expected by year end, with proposed solutions for consolidation of data.
- MFS staff has evaluated intranet options and will be implementing the intranet for MFS staff members in November 2005, using open source software. A section for Board members will be implemented in early 2006.
- MFS file naming protocol committee developed and implemented action steps for all employee groups within the organization; not only were files organized in a more logical format, but a protocol for the future was established and storage space needs were reduced.

SVPP VOLUNTEERS AND ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

- SVP partners have made a significant impact in their support of MFS on an agency wide basis. Partner contributions include participation in the technology project, serving on the Board of Directors, fundraising, and program-based committees.
- The immediate past MFS Board Chair is SVPP partner Bob McKean and we have partners on each of their three strategic committees. SVPP partner Valerie Ilsley joined the MFS Board of Directors in June 2005.
- SVP partners have provided ongoing web consultation; the MFS website has been updated, and the capability to make donations on-line was added.
- SVP members Valerie Ilsley and Les Soltesz are members of the MFS Ways to Work loan committee. The Committee has met six times and approved 10 loans for a total of \$20,000
- At the present time, we currently have 8 volunteers at MFS.

Investment Impact*:

Category	
SVPP Direct Financial Investments (Grants)	\$101,200
Donations from partners, friends, and businesses introduced by SVPP	\$58,291
Value of volunteer hours from partners and friends	\$68,950
Projected Operational impact from SVPP-supported Database and Technology Projects	\$55,000
Total	\$283,441

* Direct Investment is the actual cash transferred to the investee. Total Impact also includes donations from partners and friends, the value of volunteer hours, and the operational impact (e.g. cost savings, new capabilities) from SVPP projects. The value of volunteer hours is calculated using from \$10/hour to \$120/hour depending on the type of work performed. Projected operational impact is a projection of the financial cost savings and the financial impact of the new capabilities of the SVPP-supported projects over the first 3 years of their implementation.



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Comments:

MAKE PARENTING A PLEASURE

MFS has grown significantly over the past 10 years, and now operates about a dozen programs. With the support of SVPP and the success of Make Parenting A Pleasure, Parenting and Family Education and Support has become one of their six major program service areas. MFS continues to offer Make Parenting A Pleasure, as well as other family support programs.

DATABASE AND TECHNOLOGY PROJECT

SVPP's support of the MFS Intranet, has introduced MFS to the concept of open source software, and they are reviewing many parts of their current software library to use these new options.

Accountability and performance reporting are critical issues for human service providers. SVPP's support of the MFS database project will form the foundation for MFS to collect data and expand the difficult process of program evaluation. This is a perfect example of the kind of project that nonprofit organizations know they should undertake, but rarely do because of their dominant inclination to use all available funding to provide direct service.

With SVPP's help, MFS will establish systems that will support their work, as well as the children and families they serve, far into the future.

Volunteers:

Laurie Weiss was the initial champion and lead partner for MFS. Not only did she help start the important work with SVPP, she even made donations to MFS major fundraising event, the Classic Wines Auction.

Bob McKean served two terms as chair of the MFS Board, and brought great visioning; because of Bob's leadership of the MFS Fiscal Sustainability Committee, MFS has a Board-approved policy to grow the MFS Endowment Fund.

Valerie Ilsley started as a volunteer, joined the Ways to Work Loan Committee, and now is a Board member. Valerie's expertise in banking and finance has been invaluable to their new financial support program, Ways to Work.

Les Soltesz has also joined the Ways to Work Committee and has been a contributing member.

Eli Lamb, Drew Bernard, and Joe Barthmaier all provided valuable consulting help to MFS as MFS redesigned SVPP project to focus on technology and database issues.

Rupa Jack is SVPP's current lead partner.



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Investee Feedback

Krista Larson, Executive Director of MFS, has stated that the financial support from SVPP helped sustain Make Parenting A Pleasure Program and it is still being offered today. She felt the relationship with SVPP has been one of the best sources of “horsepower” at MFS in that SVPP has supported the overall organization with the database and technology project. Not only are SVPP partners on their board and on major strategic committees, SVPP partners are friends and donors. Krista feels very positive about the overall engagement of SVPP.

MFS Chief Operating Officer Judy Strand, who supervises all program activities, summed up the database project best by stating:

“SVPP’s support of the MFS database project is important because of many reasons. It will help standardization across the programs. It will help us better understand the bigger picture of what we’re doing. It will give us a way to clearly state who we serve. It will make us more efficient. And most importantly, it will prepare us for outcome evaluation, an important part of two of our strategic goals:

1. Build capacity to respond to internal and external needs for evaluation and outcomes
2. Work to position MFS in upper third of nonprofits in use of technology to support activities.”

Summary

MFS has received positive feedback from parents attending Make Parenting A Pleasure Program. Here are comments from two participants in the Make Parenting A Pleasure class to help SVPP know the importance of this program to the participants:

- One mother told MFS that her expectations for her daughter changed after she learned more about what is age appropriate behavior for her child. “I have gained more patience with her.” Mother reports practicing her new skills daily.
- Another mother simply declared in group one day, “I wish I had learned this earlier, why doesn’t anyone ever tell us this stuff?” She was referring to the Positive Discipline module.

By SVPP supporting the overall organization in 2005 via the database and technology project, all programs offered through MFS will be benefited. The database and technology project is integral to the survival of the entire organization. What MFS has learned from SVPP involvement is that they need to be very clear and concise with an external organization such as SVPP. Krista Larson has mentioned that SVPP is unique in that we ask for supporting data to make sure we are doing what our mission has set out to accomplish. Overall the relationship has been a positive one for both parties involved.