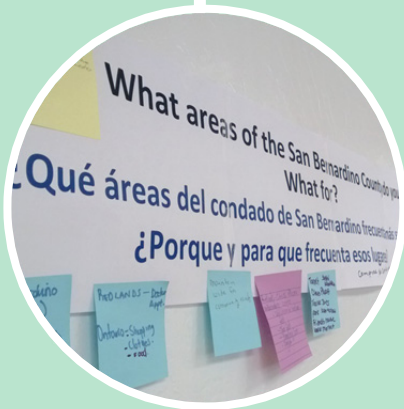




Assessing the Needs and Assets of San Bernardino County Families

Crestline – Mountain Region

December 2013



Between March and November 2013

Harder+Company Community Research

conducted eight community asset-mapping sessions throughout San Bernardino County with the goal of better understanding the needs, assets, resources, and gaps in services that families with young children in San Bernardino County face. Each session consisted of interactive activities for parents, community residents and local service providers that focused on a broad range of topics, from early education and medical resources to places where children can be active and community sources of pride. This report presents the findings from the Crestline Asset Mapping session conducted on June 3, 2013.

The Approach: Asset Mapping

For this project, First 5 San Bernardino and Harder+Company Community Research adopted asset mapping as an approach to understanding community needs. Asset mapping has at least two important advantages over other traditional needs assessment approaches that made it well-suited to meet First 5 San Bernardino’s goals: it is **strengths-based** and **inclusive**.

Asset mapping focuses first on what is available and working in a community. These resources can then be leveraged to help address the needs of that same community – allowing for a strengths-based approach to problem solving. Simply put, being aware of both the resources and needs of a community allows for the development of more strategic solutions that have a higher likelihood of achieving outcomes. Traditional needs assessment focuses primarily on what’s missing from a community.

Second, asset mapping is inclusive – the technique makes it possible for a diverse group of people to work together to describe and understand the community. First 5 San Bernardino was eager to include a strong parent perspective in this project alongside the professional knowledge that service providers and leaders bring. Anyone who lives in a community is well-positioned to participate in asset mapping regardless of education, literacy level, language spoken or prior experience with this type of activity. Asset mapping truly allows a seat at the table for anyone with firsthand knowledge of the community.

Asset mapping sessions resulted in lively discussions and debates about every community we conducted them in. We hope the information in this brief report conveys the passion that community members brought to the session. We are indebted to them for their time and participation in this process.

About this report:

The fold out map to the right provides an overview of the *mappable* assets and needs in Crestline. The report that follows provides more detailed information about the community-identified assets and needs.

MAPPING SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY'S NEEDS AND ASSETS



Crestline Asset Mapping

This summary map shows community identified assets and needs in the Crestline community. During the asset mapping workshop a mix of about 18 parents, local residents, and service providers worked together in various activities to identify current community strengths and challenges. Participants discussed a broad range of assets including schools, child care, food outlets and health care facilities. Although this is not an exhaustive list, First 5 San Bernardino and key community partners can use this map to build on existing resources and strengthen the foundation of services for children 0-5 and their families.

Key Findings:

- + Resources and activities in Crestline are clustered primarily around Lake Gregory. Along with the lone grocery store and the spattering of restaurants, families frequent the lake for exercise, recreation and to take advantage of the nearby resources.
- + Participants identified a pressing need for medical care in the area; there are no OB/GYN, Prenatal services or birthing services available. Residents must go "down the mountain" to access these services. Emergency care commonly involves being airlifted to nearby hospitals, which is costly for families with no or minimal insurance.
- + Participants lamented the lack of child-friendly activities available during the winter months. While the lake and playgrounds are accessible during the warmer months, they are inaccessible during the winter.
- + Childcare and preschool is very limited in the Crestline area. There is one Head Start in Crestline and two private preschools near Lake Arrowhead, but they are not affordable by many parents in the area.

JUNE 2013

For a full report please go to: www.first5sanbernardino.org, click on Downloads

What does everyday life look like for parents and community members in Crestline?

Most community members in the Crestline Region travel “down the mountain” to neighboring cities on a regular basis to work, buy groceries, seek medical care, and to find children’s activities. While families value the natural beauty of Crestline, it can sometimes create barriers to raising young children. Transportation is a major concern among residents. The lack of navigable roads and minimal public transportation makes it difficult for some families to access basic resources, especially in the winter months. Additionally, the school bus system is problematic for those parents who cannot afford the \$200/year transportation fee.



Service providers mapped out where their clients grocery shop, take their children to school and receive medical care.



Access to healthy affordable food continues to be a challenge for many families.

Currently, Goodwin’s Market is the only grocery store in Crestline and it is considered “pricier” by some participants. Many residents find it more economical to shop at stores in Lake Arrowhead (for example, *Stater Brothers*) or to buy in bulk at *Costco* located in San Bernardino. For better quality meat, fruits, and vegetables, participants noted going to *Jensen’s* and *Trader Joes* in Redlands, or the farmers markets in Lake Arrowhead and Running Springs. While several local farmers markets provide affordable fruits and vegetables, they are typically only open during the summer months. Participants mentioned that options for dining out are limited in the area. While families eat out at nicer (and normally “healthier”) restaurants on occasion, they more frequently dine at fast-food establishments, often due to cost. Local service providers (who know the community well) mentioned that when families in Crestline eat out, it is most frequently at inexpensive fast-food restaurants like *McDonalds* and *Domino’s Pizza*.



Community members value places for family gatherings and recreation.

Asset mapping participants all value family time that involves healthy and educational activities. Places like *Lake Gregory*, *Thousand Pines Christian Camp*, and *Lake Gregory Community Church* are important resources for parents with young children. *Lake Gregory* is valued for its walking trails. Families frequent the lake for exercise and outdoor play (e.g., baseball), and look forward to the water park during the summer months. *Thousand Pines Christian Camp* offers summer and winter activities, including swim lessons for infants and toddlers. *Lake Gregory Community Church*, aside from being a place for worship, offers vacation bible schools for free.

Although these areas hold great value to the Crestline community, many residents reported that finding things to help keep younger children physically active is challenging in this region. For example, participants reported that there is only one public playground in Crestline. However, it is next to a busy road and is not fenced, creating a risk that children may accidentally enter the road while playing. Parents do make use of playgrounds and parks that are a part of local schools, however, these facilities are often not accessible during the winter months. Residents also reported that there are few affordable indoor activities for families to participate in during the winter months. As a result families spend most of their free time at home which can feel isolating, especially for parents who care for young children. When asked what they wish they had in the community, many participants mentioned that affordable and updated recreational facilities, like a community pool and gym/fitness centers would be valuable to families.



Parents utilized stickers to map where their children obtain exercise.

How do parents care for their families' health?



Families often have to travel down the mountain to access routine and specialized medical care.

Routine medical care options in the area include the *Rural Health Clinic, Mountain Community Hospital* and several local doctors who provide free or discounted basic services (e.g. physical exams) to patients whose insurance does not provide them care in the community. The small number of local providers means more trips “down the mountain” for Crestline families. According to participants, it is typical for Crestline residents to access medical services “down the mountain” in Redlands (e.g. *Kaiser Permanente*) and San Bernardino.

Families face similar challenges with accessing specialized and emergency care. Prenatal care, for example, is not available in Crestline. According to participants, the only prenatal and obstetrics/gynecology clinic in the area closed down in 2009. Only in emergency cases will a pregnant woman give birth in one of the mountain hospitals. Otherwise, everyone gets sent “down the mountain” to receive prenatal services and give birth at *Loma Linda Medical Center, St. Bernardine's Medical Center* or *Kaiser Permanente*. Many parents also voiced concerns about the **lack of accessible pediatric specialists** in the region, which may prevent access to critical early intervention for young children with health concerns.

Similarly, emergency care is limited in Crestline. Emergency care commonly involves being airlifted to nearby hospitals, which is costly for families with no or minimal insurance. The *Community Hospital* offers emergency services, but participants indicated that they prefer to use other hospitals with more extensive services. They prefer to visit *Loma Linda Medical Center, Beaver Medical Clinic, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center* or *St. Bernardine's Medical Center*.



Ensuring children practice good oral health is a priority for parents, but most feel there continues to be a lack of services and information to ensure this.

Participants indicated they attempt to instill good oral health habits in their children by brushing their teeth, flossing, and using mouthwash daily. However, many parents are not able to seek regular preventative dental care for themselves and their children. Specifically, participants cited a lack of

pediatric dentists in the area and the cost of dental visits as the biggest barriers to providing regular oral health care for children. According to one participant, “We need more pediatric dentists who can help calm scared kids. It’s very hard to get dental services in Crestline, community members have to go down the mountain. Even with incentives, like traveling vouchers, we can’t get people to go for dental services.” *The Mountain Community Clinic* offers free dental screenings, but families with young children still require services not found in the area.

Parents are eager to receive practical information to help them develop good oral health habits in their young children but feel sources of obtaining this information are limited in the region. Some parents reported receiving information from their dentists, but schools and social service agencies play the largest role in distributing oral health information in Crestline. Dentists visit schools and send home dental information showing how to brush teeth. Teachers will suggest activities for parents to do, and they get volunteer credit if they fill out the form showing that they completed the activity with their children. *First 5 San Bernardino* and *WIC* offices also provide valuable sources of oral health information to families.

Supporting healthy & thriving FAMILIES!

Tells us about yourselves:

Age: _____ How many children live with you? _____ How many are under 5? _____
 Are you a _____ Parent _____ Grandparent _____ Service Provider _____
 _____ Foster Parent _____ Other _____

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What kinds of dental health activities does your family practice regularly?
 Ex. Brushing teeth daily, flossing, etc.:

What are some of the difficulties to maintaining good dental health?

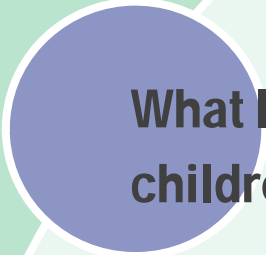
To keep my family healthy, the three most important things are:

Where do you get information about your child's dental health? Ex. Community events, mobile clinics, dentist, family, etc.

harder + company FIRST5

Identifying parent’s practice and knowledge:

Community members utilized “placemats”, like the one pictured here, and worked in teams to identify dental health practices, challenges, and gaps in services.



What learning opportunities are available for young children and their families?



Parents value education for their children and opportunities to learn together.

Participants engaged in educational activities with their children regularly; this included reading to them, educational games, group activities and trips to the library.

The public libraries in Crestline and neighboring Running Springs and Blue Jay provide valuable resources to families, including story times and family playgroups. Participants highlighted additional needs for preschools, childcare and resources for handicapped and disabled children. While social service agencies supplement these gaps with home visitation programs, preschool services are limited to the *Valley of Enchantment Head Start*. If families cannot secure a spot there, they have to look to private preschools in nearby Blue Jay, Lake Arrowhead and Running Springs. These programs may be out of reach financially for many Crestline families.

Community Desires for the Mountain Region

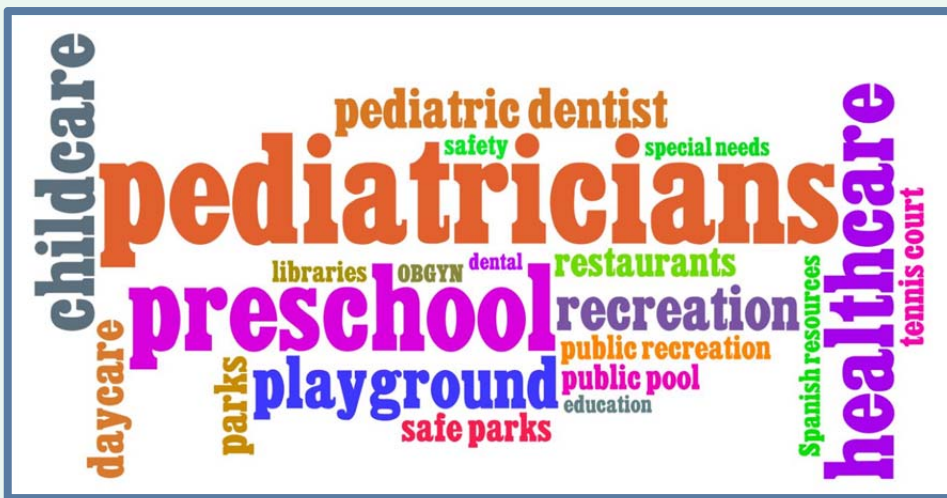
The word cloud below illustrates resources participants most desire for Crestline and the surrounding Mountain communities. Participants were asked to name some things they would like to see in their community. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Overall community members desire more **family-friendly recreation**, more **grocery** options, and **childcare and preschool resources**.



Summary of community-identified needs in Crestline

- Families reported a lack of basic resources that make it challenging to raise young children in Crestline. Residents often have to leave the area to access important services and resources, including medical care, childcare and shopping. This sometimes includes traveling to Lake Arrowhead, San Bernardino City, Redlands, and as far west as Ontario.
- Childcare, early education resources (including more preschools), and activities for children ages 0-5 were identified as major needs in Crestline. Although there is one Head Start and one public preschool in the community, there remains a lack of appropriate services to help children learn and develop. Community members also expressed the need for more child-friendly activities- especially during the winter months.
- There was a pronounced need for medical care in this area, especially for low income families. Currently there is one community hospital, which may not serve all residents equally due to insurance restrictions. Many Crestline residents have to travel outside the area to receive medical care, including prenatal and emergency care. Furthermore, the medical services available for children are perceived as limited, with few pediatricians and very limited dental services.
- A lack of walkable neighborhoods, recreational activities and scarcity of public transportation in Crestline cause many community members to feel isolated, especially during the winter months.

Summary of needs in Crestline and the Mountains Region*



*Community members were asked to name some things that families with young children need that currently are not available in the region. The “word cloud” to the right illustrates their responses. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Some of the biggest needs for children and families in the Mountain Region include access to **pediatric care**, **preschool** and **childcare**, and **playgrounds** for children.

Summary and conclusions

The community of Crestline cares deeply about the well-being of young children and their families. While residents in many regions of the county face challenges in raising young children, some of these challenges are more pronounced in Crestline (and the Mountain Region) than in other cities. Crestline is geographically isolated from services and resources, which means that families have to travel long distances (generally at least 40 miles each way) to access affordable, healthy food and other services that are not readily available locally, including health care. Snow and cold weather in the winter months make it difficult to provide playtime and stimulating activities for young children. Families frequently feel isolated during these months. However, the community also has extensive assets. This includes many outdoor venues for activities, such as Lake Gregory, a strong Head Start and programs for parents and young children offered through area public libraries. Crestline residents and service providers (most of whom are also residents) have a strong sense of community that can be leveraged to build upon the existing services and infrastructure to improve life for families with children zero to five.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the community residents who attended this event and worked diligently to identify their community's needs and assets. We also want to thank local non-profits and churches that helped recruit community members and provided their knowledge and support every step of the way.



First 5 San Bernardino was created in December, 1998 in order to realize the benefits of Proposition 10 (California Children and Families Act) for the County's youngest residents and their families. The act created a program for the purpose of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age.

Vision – All children in San Bernardino County are healthy, safe, nurtured, eager to learn and ready to succeed.

Mission – Promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age five and their families and communities.



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Harder+Company Community Research is a comprehensive social research and planning firm with offices in San Francisco, Davis, San Diego, and Los Angeles, California.

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