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## Neighborhood Place – Edgewood and the Community Partnerships for Protecting Children

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The grand opening of the Neighborhood Place–Edgewood (NP-E) in San Antonio on June 9, 2007 celebrated a facility that is destined to improve the lives of many West Side families. The Neighborhood Place–Edgewood, also known as *El Hogar de Los Vecinos*, is Texas' first comprehensive neighborhood Hub developed from a national model through the work of Community Partnerships for Protecting Children (CPPC). As a result of this initiative, the once-empty rooms of a vacant West Side school now buzz with computer literacy programs, counseling rooms, dance therapy classes, and family-friendly meetings and trainings.



The CPPC partnership is taking a holistic approach to helping families, abused and neglected children, and at-risk youth. Along with *Making Connections-San Antonio (MC-SA)* and Family Service Association, partners include the City of San Antonio, the Bexar County Juvenile Justice System, Child Protective Services, the Edgewood Independent School District and other community and faith based organizations. CPPC seeks to involve parents, extended family, neighbors, schools, health care providers, government agencies and nonprofits in the work of helping children to be safe and families to thrive. By building networks of support, the whole community can shepherd the development of children and raise the chances for their success in school.



The CPPC model employs four main tenets that seek to:

- Develop a partnership to provide services to children more efficiently through co-location of services;
- Involve community residents through family and resident engagement;
- Develop a workable governance structure in order to have impact; and
- Utilize the Quality Service Review (QSR) system to examine and validate service performance.

*Making Connections-San Antonio* and Family Service Association took the lead in establishing the NP-E by refurbishing a vacant elementary school in the Edgewood Independent School District (EISD). Family Service Association leases the space from EISD and was able to get the funds necessary for the upgrades. *MC-SA* and Family Service gathered together the right mix of tenants, who are offering families a comprehensive array of services.

### ***Co-location brings better service***

Because they are co-located at the NP-E, agencies can more easily respond to the needs of area families and children. Among services offered by Family Service Association are parenting resources and education, family and individual counseling, child care provider training, and help for seniors. Child Protective Services (CPS) moved three of their family-based units to the building, and Adult Protective Services (APS) moved in one of their units. From this centralized West Side location, CPS and APS workers can more quickly reach out to area families. The American Indians in Texas (AIT) Fatherhood Initiative established a satellite office at NP-E and is expanding its work in youth development and violence prevention. Teens from Family Service's Youth Against Gang Activity (YAGA) are taking their anti-drug, anti-gang, message to peers and younger students at neighborhood schools.

Two other Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF)-connected programs managed by Family Service are housed out of the Neighborhood Place-Edgewood. They are Families and Schools Together (FAST), a parent engagement program and the Texas Early Education Model (TEEM), which focuses on providing training to teachers in early childhood classrooms. FAST and TEEM are being implemented at J. T. Brackenridge Elementary School in the San Antonio Independent School District (SASD) and Loma Park Elementary School in the Edgewood Independent School District (EISD). The initiatives were begun in those schools through an augmentation grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) that is part of the AECF initiative "Children Healthy and Prepared to Succeed in School" CHAPSS.

The location is right for all these services, since the three targeted zip codes are among the poorest in San Antonio, with a per capita income that is less than 40% of the state average and a population of children under five that is almost 50% higher than the US average. Other services will simply make life safer and more pleasant for residents in the area. *Vecinos* (neighbors) can drop in to pick up garden tools from the community tool shed or bring the pet dog and cat in to be spayed or neutered at occasional mobile clinics. *Making Connections – San Antonio* is establishing the West Side Center for Resident Engagement in Community Evaluation and Research or WS-CRECER at NP-E. This community-driven data warehouse will continue the important research efforts *MC-SA* has developed with the community.

