



# **The Bridges to Friendship Partnership**

## **A Case Study**

**January 2003**

Excerpted from the Report:

*Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: Case  
Studies of Six Partnerships Used to Address Environmental  
Justice Issues in Communities (EPA/100-R-03-002)*

Prepared for the Federal Interagency Working Group on  
Environmental Justice by the U.S. EPA Office of Policy,  
Economics, and Innovation

This case study has been excerpted from the report: *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: Case Studies of Six Partnerships Used to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities* (January 2003/EPA/100-R-03-002). View this report on-line at: <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/ej.htm>. This report is a companion report to *Towards an Environmental Justice Collaborative Model: An Evaluation of the Use of Partnerships to Address Environmental Justice Issues in Communities* (January 2003/EPA/100-R-03-001). View both of these on-line at: <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/ej.htm>.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation. Washington, D.C. A team based in EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation developed these reports. Eric Marsh was the project manager for this effort.

## ***The Bridges to Friendship Partnership: A Case Study***

### ***Table of Contents***

<a href="#"><u>Partnership Background</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>Partnership Process</u></a> .....	4
<a href="#"><u>Partnership Goals</u></a> .....	7
<a href="#"><u>Partnership Activities and Accomplishments</u></a> .....	8
<a href="#"><u>Measuring Partnership Success</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>Partnership Successes</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>Partnership Challenges</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Interviewees' Recommendations for Improving the Partnership</u></a> .....	13
<a href="#"><u>Interviewees' Recommendations for Other Communities Using Partnerships</u></a> .....	13
<a href="#"><u>Value of the Collaborative Partnership</u></a> .....	14
<a href="#"><u>Value of Federal Involvement in the Partnership</u></a> .....	14
<a href="#"><u>Key Findings</u></a> .....	16
<a href="#"><u>List of Interviewees</u></a> .....	18
<a href="#"><u>Works Cited</u></a> .....	19
<a href="#"><u>Endnotes</u></a> .....	20

## Bridges to Friendship Partnership

---

*Partners are involved because they know it is the right thing to do and they have been doing it for four years.*

*It is like going from zero collaboration to a huge amount of collaboration.*

*The things important to the Navy are understanding, and identifying, issues that are important to the community, which include, jobs, environmental cleanup, parking, you name it.*

*[Bridges to Friendship] is trying to embrace the unique needs of the population through community visioning. Much work has happened in conjunction with what is going on [with] the Navy Base.*

— Interviewees, Bridges to Friendship Partnership

### *Community History\**

Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, is bordered by the states of Maryland and Virginia, and divided into four quadrants: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest and Southeast. The Southeast and Southwest quadrants consist of approximately 146,619<sup>+</sup> people representing a variety of racial and social backgrounds. Neighborhoods also vary ranging from upper middle class to low income. The Southeast quadrant is also home to the Washington Navy Yard, which is bordered by the Anacostia River to the south and occupies over seventy acres of space. The Navy Yard is surrounded by neighborhoods noted by the local press for high drug use and crime rates, a large unemployed population, and high numbers of welfare recipients.<sup>1</sup>

The neighborhoods in Southwest and Southeast D.C. traditionally housed lower to middle income Caucasian and African American working classes.<sup>2</sup> For example, in the late 1800's one of the first D.C. suburbs, called Uniontown, was created for the Navy Yard workers in Southeast D.C. Originally this was a "Whites-only" settlement but after the Civil War, Frederick Douglas broke the exclusive covenant and many free African Americans settled in the area.<sup>3</sup>

By 1920, Southwest and Southeast D.C. were made up of vibrant and diverse communities. For example, Anacostia, the section of Southeast D.C. east of the Anacostia River, claimed a higher percentage of home ownership than any other sections of D.C.<sup>4</sup> The area was made up of thriving neighborhoods where Navy Yard employees, doctors, lawyers and other community members shopped, visited movie theaters, and strolled down the scenic Anacostia waterfront.<sup>5</sup> Southwest D.C. was also thriving. Although traditionally poor, the years between 1895 and 1930 were hailed as the neighborhood's "golden years", characterized by rich cultural traditions and strong community ties.<sup>6</sup>

---

\* Interviews for this case study were conducted from December 2001 through March 2002. Thirteen separate interviews were conducted and a total of sixteen persons participated. Interviews were conducted with representatives of non-profit organizations, federal agencies, and local agencies.

<sup>+</sup> Figure calculated by using (1) D.C. Office Of Planning/State Data Center's information overlaying the 2000 census tracts on the D.C. quadrant divisions, and (2) the 2000 U.S. Census population data.

However, rapid population growth, poor zoning laws, urban renewal in selected D.C. neighborhoods and the creation of concentrated public housing lead to a socio-economic shift in the population of Southeast D.C. In 1967 the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) began construction of 30,000 public housing units in Anacostia. Public service expansion did not keep pace with the influx of residents to Anacostia, however, and by the 1970's "the area schools were 83% over capacity" and there were an inadequate number of health care facilities in the area.<sup>7</sup> During this same time, areas in Southwest D.C. also underwent major transitions as neighborhoods perceived by city officials as slums were cleared, streets were widened, new streets and superblocks were constructed, and businesses, residents, and community landmarks were relocated or eliminated.<sup>8</sup>

Through the 1980s to the late 1990s conditions in several neighborhoods throughout Southwest and Southeast D.C. continued to deteriorate. The area's traditional diversity could no longer be seen, and in Anacostia in the late 1990's the population was approximately 90 percent African American, seven percent Caucasian, and two percent Hispanic<sup>9</sup>. In 1997, Anacostia residents had an average yearly income of \$26,000 versus a citywide average of \$40,000, and only 28 percent of the adult residents had attended college compared to 52 percent of adult citywide residents.<sup>10</sup>

Recently however, conditions in Southwest and Southeast, have taken a turn for the better. In 1997, for instance, the Good Hope Marketplace shopping center—the largest retail development in Southeast D.C. in over 20 years and one of only two supermarkets in all of Southeast—was completed.<sup>11</sup> Similar initiatives began in Southeast in conjunction with the planned redevelopment of the waterfront neighborhoods along the Anacostia River. During the increased revitalization efforts in Southeast D.C., the Navy Yard also began a major redevelopment effort. The division between the Navy Yard and the community, long symbolized by the Yard's high brick walls, were beginning to be bridged.

Bridge building began in 1995, when the Navy Yard was designated to serve as a major administrative facility for the Navy, through the Base Realignment and Closure Act. More than 5,000 additional military and civilian personnel were to be relocated at the Navy Yard over the next several years, doubling its workforce at the time. Furthermore, in 1996, a lawsuit filed by the Sierra Club alleging that waste from the Navy Yard and South East Federal Center (SEFC) discharged into the Anacostia posed an imminent and substantial danger to human health and the environment. In January 1997, under EPA oversight, the Navy completed an environmental investigation of the Washington Naval Yard facility, and in 1999, the Navy Yard was approved for cleanup under the Superfund program.

### *Partnership Background*

In conjunction with any installation restoration, in this case, the Superfund cleanup project, the Navy is required to establish a Restoration Advisory Board. The Navy Yard's Restoration Advisory Board began regular meetings to inform the community about the cleanup procedures at the Navy Yard and garner input directly from surrounding residents as well as from local community-based organizations. Issues associated with cleanup raised concerns from residents regarding area redevelopment and the potential displacement of surrounding community members by new Navy Yard personnel.

The new independent development in the area, along with indications that Navy Yard redevelopment would spur additional development outside the base, raised concerns of many

local residents who feared that the purchase and/or restoration of deteriorating urban property by developers or incoming, middle-class or affluent people would eventually result in the displacement of lower-income residents. At the same time, the Navy Yard, community-based organizations, federal, and city governments had begun to examine ways to respond to these and other issues, including concerns about the Navy Yard work force and limitations. Eventually, these different groups began pooling their resources in a collective effort to revitalize the Navy Yard's surrounding communities by providing "wide access to economic, employment, and training opportunities for residents".<sup>12</sup> This initial collaborative effort, referred to as Walls to Bridges, lasted less than a year. However, many of these same organizations regrouped to form a much stronger collaborative effort in 1998, which still operates today.

In July 1998, fourteen organizations signed a partnership agreement marking the beginning of the Bridges to Friendship (B2F) Partnership. Admiral Christopher Weaver, who had recently become Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard, began to champion the B2F mission. Since that time the B2F Partnership has recruited approximately 40 members, including six federal agencies, three city agencies, 25 community-based organizations, four for-profit organizations, and two universities. The partnership has also received significant attention and praise. In 1998, the White House formally recognized the B2F Partnership for its commitment to environmental justice and empowering community residents. Furthermore, in May 2000, the Interagency Working Group on the Environmental Justice demonstration project named the B2F Partnership a national Environmental Justice demonstration project, because of its commitments to collaborative problem-solving.

### *Partnership Process*

Upon signing the partnership agreement in July 1998, the 14 original B2F partner organizations developed an operational structure that consisted of five work groups, a steering committee composed of the five work group chairs, and an executive board composed of the original signatories to the partnership agreement. The Executive Board designated an executive director to continue building partnership resources, conduct overall coordination of the effort, and provide an administrative infrastructure. The executive director carried out his duties with the help of contractor support. A work group chair led each work group, whose focus was defined by direct and indirect (via community-based organizations) public input. The work group chairs were originally charged with implementing activities that would move the partnership forward to meet its goals. The chairs of the workgroups were given extensive autonomy and were expected to report to the Executive Board on actions, proposed milestones, and needs.

Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center
Arthur Anderson
Covenant House Washington
D.C. Department of Employment Services
Ellen Wilson Redevelopment LLC
Friendship House Association
Global Environment & Technology Foundation
U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Forest Service
U.S. Department of Interior, National Parks Service
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. General Services Administration
U.S. Navy, Navy District Washington

*Figure 1. EPA List of Original Members of the Bridges to Friendship Partnership*

Originally the Executive Board and the Steering Committee met once a month, then settled into a quarterly schedule. The Executive Board and Steering Committee, whose roles have been somewhat integrated over time, are charged with the tasks of maintaining the

partnership's mission and addressing conflicts or questions brought to the B2F Partnership from its member organizations. The executive director, David Ouderkirk, and Admiral Weaver typically preside over these Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, during which the participating organizations voice their views about the partnership's progress. In addition, the executive director also updates members on the plans and activities of the various work groups. Following Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, session minutes are typically written-up, distributed to the session participants for review via electronic mail, finalized, and then made available to all B2F Partnership members. In addition to the Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions, the executive director occasionally calls all members together to discuss a critical topic, or to allow the work groups to update all partner members on their recent activities.

Executive Board/Steering Committee sessions usually produce decisions that are agreeable to all. This is perhaps, due, in part, to the notion that all those participating in the partnership want to see genuine community redevelopment in the area. Questions raised by partner members center more on how resources can be linked and made to fit together rather than on whether or not something should be done. Other important reasons for the sustainability of the effort may include the belief by participating organizations that it is in the best interest of their own organization to participate, consistent and effective B2F leadership, the fact that most participants either reside or work in or near the Southwest/Southeast D.C. area, and the implementation of activities that can be easily supported by partner members and the community. Although disagreements do arise between organizations about how activities should be implemented, in most instances the members make a genuine effort to work through them. If an issue around a certain activity proves irresolvable, the issue may not be addressed again or the concerned organizations in some instances may choose to no longer participate in that particular activity. According to the executive director, partners seek to reach consensus positions on issues that most parties feel positive about and accommodating positions on issues that generate strong reactions from a few or several organizations. No organization, however, has withdrawn immediately from B2F because of a conflict; rather, dissatisfied partners gradually reduce their participation in the partnership over time.<sup>13</sup>

Two B2F work groups currently design and implement most of the activities for the B2F Partnership. A work group chair is responsible for calling and facilitating work group meetings, during which members assess existing activities and, if necessary, brainstorm, plan, and decide how to implement new ones. Decisions on actions to take are typically based upon the needs of the Southeast and Southwest D.C. communities as perceived by the work group members and the resources that B2F members can provide. Once a work group agrees to a plan of action, this plan is communicated at the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings. Although technically the B2F leadership can disapprove of a work group's plan, in most instances the action plans are endorsed.

As with the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings, in most instances little disagreement has emerged amongst the parties within the work groups. This is due mainly, perhaps, to the same reasons outlined above. In addition, the work groups are not static. If members recognize that their work group is no longer critical, they either discontinue the work group or transfer the necessary remaining functions to a more active work group. Disagreements and challenges do arise, however. For instance, within the Job Training Work Group, disagreements centered on both the focus and the methods to be used for the B2F job training program.<sup>14</sup> In addition, some work group members have shown less commitment than others and some have been resistant to participation by various organizations with whom they have had issues in the past. Similar to the handling of difficult topics in the Executive Board/Steering Committee meetings, if work group members cannot resolve them, the topics

may be left avoided, or the organization voicing the concerns may decide to leave the work group.

The partnership primarily relies on voluntary resource commitments from its partner members. It also originally relied upon federal funding to support the executive director position and to provide contractor support for B2F activities and publications. In October 1998, the Navy funded David Ouderkirk, an EPA employee under an Interagency Agreement, enabling him to direct B2F Partnership activities. Later, in February 1999, however, the partnership encountered problems funding its management infrastructure. Federal legal counsel determined that the B2F Partnership was a “non-federal entity”, prohibiting Navy personnel from directing the B2F Partnership and the use of appropriated funds for any B2F activity. This decision prohibited Ouderkirk from directing the B2F Partnership and prohibited the Navy’s contractor from working with B2F to provide support for meeting logistics, reporting, printing, web-page design and maintenance, and list serves. Furthermore, in November 1999, the Interagency Agreement for the executive director position had expired, and EPA found itself in the position of no longer being able to loan B2F a full time employee. At the same time, the partnership agreed that the position had to be funded by a non-federal organization due to the ruling of the federal lawyers. These funding and placement issues took months to resolve and B2F had its first regroup meeting in July 2000. These various set backs greatly hampered the participating groups’ abilities to coordinate their actions and slowed the partnership’s momentum. The funding problems have only temporarily been resolved. For the time being the executive director position is funded by the City, but located within the federal government (U.S. Navy). There are still no extra resources for administrative contractor support.



Despite these challenges, approximately 40 organizations continue to participate in the B2F Partnership and exhibit a high level of enthusiasm when working together. Although B2F maintains a well-defined operational structure, the partnership allows for a significant degree of organizational flexibility by design. Organizations can participate in the partnership to gain and share information about resources and opportunities that are pertinent to their work. If organizations identify a problem or project that fits with B2F's mission and goals, the organizations then join the partnership, providing information, resources, and enthusiasm. If these organizations continue to have projects that fall in line with B2F's mission as well as resources to contribute, they become permanent partners and continue to enrich and add depth to the partnership. If however, their plans no longer coincide with B2F's mission, the organizations stop sending representatives to B2F meetings and stop assuming partnership responsibilities. A representation of the B2F Partnership is shown in the figure below.

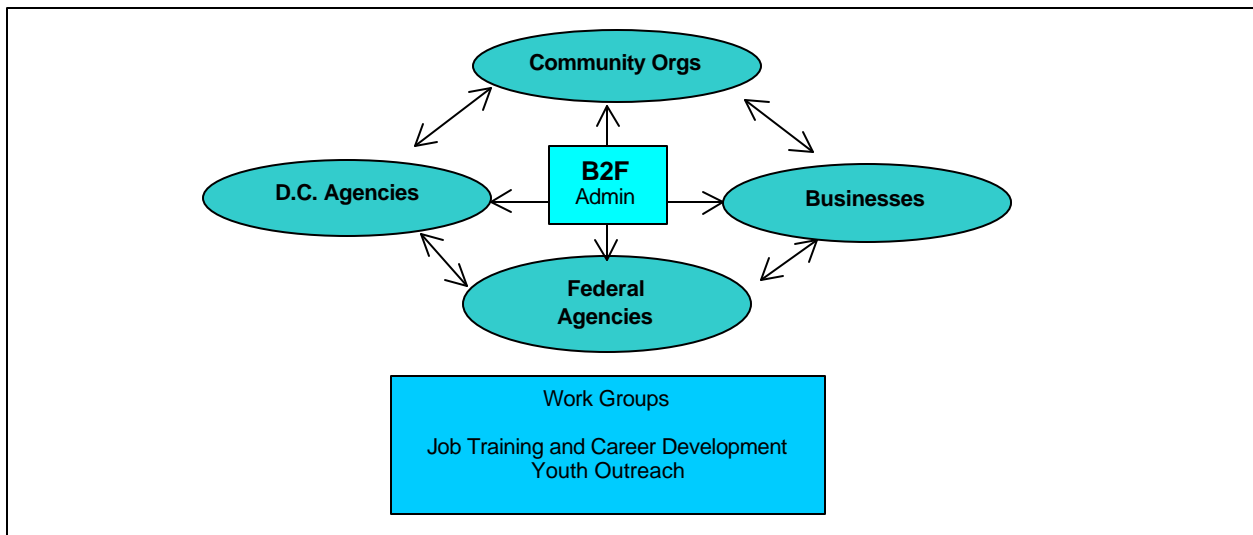


Figure 2. EPA Representation of the Bridges to Friendship (B2F) Partnership, Washington, DC

### Partnership Goals

As part of B2F's formal agreement, B2F developed a vision statement, mission statement, and statement of purpose. B2F's vision statement is described below.<sup>15</sup>

#### Vision Statement of the Bridges to Friendship Partnership

To bring about revitalized Southeast and Southwest Washington D.C. communities, to preserve and enhance the quality of life and the natural and cultural heritage of the area, Bridges to Friendship will leverage existing resources and expertise, act as a catalyst, create new synergies, and support existing efforts.

In order to bring about this revitalization, the B2F partnership, as described in its mission statement, seeks to maintain "a process for organizational collaboration and delivery of services in a positive operating environment for all of the partners to nurture trust, understanding, and a shared vision."

In addition to the statement of purpose, mission statement, and vision statements, B2F has articulated five main goals. The partnership describes these goals as follows: (1) support the federal government's commitment to environmental justice, (2) provide residents with job training and the opportunity to compete for real jobs, (3) empower the community and promote community building, (4) restore the environment, and (5) promote sustainable economic development.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, each workgroup has developed its own goals. The Job Training and Career Development Work Group seeks to create sustainable job training and lifelong learning opportunities in Southeast and Southwest D.C. The Youth Outreach Work Group seeks maximum participation of youths five to 25 years of age in activities and opportunities generated by the redevelopment of the Navy Yard. The purpose of this activity is to promote and improve youth educational, social, and economic development. Moreover, this work group seeks to provide work skills and training opportunities for youth in the construction and environmental industry while exposing them to diverse training opportunities through job shadowing, internships, and job placement.

The now discontinued Small Business/Private Sector Outreach Work Group, whose work has been absorbed to an extent by the other by the remaining two work groups, sought to achieve sustainable economic development by creating entrepreneurial opportunities for the greater Southeast D.C. area. Additionally, the group sought to foster interaction and support from the private sector. This work group was responsible for fostering relationships with contractors and potential private sector partners. Ultimately, the group focused on increasing the number of quality businesses operating in Southeast and Southwest Washington, D.C. The now discontinued Community Outreach Work Group, whose work was also been absorbed by the remaining two work groups, sought to broaden community awareness and interaction beyond sub-community boundaries through an improved environment, more-attractive urban landscape, and increased perception of safety and trust.

#### *Partnership Activities and Accomplishments*

*The primary product of Bridges to Friendship is the process of building organizational bridges and fostering their use – identifying and organizing the sharing of resources and serving as a broker, catalyst or implementor to reach common goals.*

-Excerpt from the B2F Statement of Purpose

The B2F Partnership activities and accomplishments center around (1) securing and leveraging resources, (2) linking Southeast and Southwest D.C. youth to local job opportunities, (3) and sharing information among partner organizations and the community. While B2F's partner organizations carry out many of the B2F activities, the partnership has been responsible for enhancing the magnitude and number of accomplishments of its partner members. During the first year the B2F Partnership was credited by its partners with helping garner over \$4 million in grant funding. This money was distributed to individual partners, and used to help accomplish the goals embodied in B2F's statement of purpose, mission statement, and vision statements.

As part of B2F's efforts to link Southeast and Southwest D.C. youth to local job opportunities, B2F has engaged in a number of activities. As of January 2002, the B2F Partnership's environmental job training program had graduated more than 300 students with a job placement rate of over 70 percent, according to the Alice Hamilton Occupational Training Center, one of B2F's partners. These students were trained in hazardous material clean-up,

asbestos abatement, lead paint abatement, general construction industry safety, first aid/CPR, control of biochemical hazards in construction, and other topics. Graduates from the environmental jobs training program were involved with the cleanup activities at the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Brentwood Postal Facility.

In addition to its environmental job training program, the B2F Partnership is branching into other promising career fields in order to provide more opportunities for neighborhood youth. For instance, two B2F partners—the Navy Yard and Covenant House Washington—recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, signaling the start of a child care training and job placement focus for the B2F Partnership. In addition, B2F partners including EPA Region 3, Covenant House Washington, the Low Impact Development Center, Community Resources, Inc., and the Sustainable Communities Initiatives have developed a low-impact development training program.

Bridges to Friendship has also facilitated job shadowing, internship, and elementary school programs along with life skills workshops. Internships have been provided by a number of federal agency partners. For example, Covenant House Washington and the National Park Service implemented Operation Challenge in 1999, an internship program that provided summer employment opportunities for 40 community youth. Furthermore, the Alexandria Seaport Foundation has joined together with Covenant House Washington in order to provide pre-apprenticeship training for the building trades. The partnership has also teamed with Starbase-Atlantis, a program designed to stimulate disadvantaged youth's interest in science, math, and technology development. In addition, the partnership has collaborated to develop a "Pathways to Your Future" workshop that includes a manual with different modules on personal development, including such topics as writing effective resumes and giving effective interviews.

The B2F Partnership, along with individual members, is further working towards reforming a number of federal processes. For instance, the Navy Yard has made efforts to refine their hiring processes in order to facilitate hiring of local residents. In addition the B2F Partnership has produced a document issued by Naval District Washington, entitled "Lessons and Suggestions for Effective Community Partnering." This document provides feedback on opportunities to improve federally funded services.

Moreover, B2F has engaged in a number of activities to facilitate the sharing of information between partner organizations and the community. For instance, the partnership is collaborating with the Workforce Organizations for Regional Collaboration to track and make available information regarding employment opportunities for District residents using a database. In addition, B2F implemented "Columbia Rising," a series of community dialogues whose "purpose is to create neutral ground for discussion among community representatives with diverse viewpoints on major community issues, and move toward the collaborative resolution of those issues."<sup>17</sup> Finally, the partnership has orchestrated a number of community meetings and published a series of newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, and one annual report, in order to advertise B2F activities and gain community input for future activities.

The partnership also tried to stimulate new development in the area, particularly courting businesses that will provide jobs to local residents. The B2F Partnership has organized business development seminars and fairs in order to provide contracting opportunities and technical assistance to local businesses. The partnership has also partnered with the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, a District, federal, and community partnership, centered on revitalizing the Anacostia waterfront and nearby communities<sup>18</sup>. B2F is further active in community pride activities, by participating in community events and clean-up days. For instance, the Navy

regularly conducts community cleanup days where Admiral Weaver along with his staff participate alongside local residents to remove trash along the Anacostia River and from local neighborhoods.

The following sections primarily describe interviewees' responses to questions gathered from interviews conducted by EPA's Office of Policy, Economics, and Innovation during from the month of December 2001 to the month of March 2002. The sections focus on interviewees' impressions regarding measuring partnership success, partnership success and challenges, recommendations for improving the partnership, overall value of the partnership, and the value of federal involvement in the partnership.

### *Measuring Partnership Success*

The B2F Partnership initiated several efforts to monitor and evaluate the partnership to help partners determine success of its activities. Efforts were unsuccessful due to severe limitations on the administrative resources of the partners and the partnership as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Despite this, B2F partners provided several suggestions for measuring success. Nine of the thirteen interviewees who answered the question mentioned that counting the number of people pre-trained, trained and placed in a job would be one way that B2F could measure success. Four of thirteen specifically mentioned the D.C. Department of Employment Services-sponsored database developed by B2F that tracks the number of students pre-trained, trained, and placed in jobs as a tool that could be used to support this monitoring effort. Three interviewees suggested that counting the number of community events and the number of people who attended those events would serve as a measurement of success, with one noting that, for example, one B2F-sponsored event had more than 3,000 people in attendance. One interviewee noted that after a "clean up day" there is an immediate observation of stronger community pride, as well as an indirect correlation between the amount of visible community trash and neighborhood pride. They suggested that this was a measure of success. Another interviewee mentioned the number of businesses that invest and move into the area could be a measure of success. To actually measure success, she/he noted that the B2F Partnership could count the number of private and public sector jobs that open up in the area. Finally, one interviewee noted that another measure of success would be the number of residents in the community that know about the B2F Partnership.

### *Partnership Successes*

When asked whether interviewees were satisfied with their ability to participate in the partnership's decision-making process, sixteen out of the sixteen indicated they were satisfied. As one interviewee described it, "effort put into the process is directly proportional to the benefits received." However, three interviewees mentioned that although the involvement opportunities were available, their organizations were not attending as many meetings as they would have hoped.

When asked if the issues most important to their organization were adequately addressed, nine out of the sixteen interviewees stated that the collaboration was not only making a genuine effort to meet the B2F Partnership goals but that the issues most important to them were being addressed. The seven other interviewees were generally satisfied with partnership activities but qualified their statements with the following comments. One federal representative cited his/her frustration with continually needing to convince new agency deputy administrators about the merit of the B2F Partnership. Another mentioned that the problems of gentrification and poor quality school systems were not being adequately addressed. Two

interviewees mentioned that not enough jobs were available once the job training activities were over. Finally, one stated that he/she “wished that B2F could measure its success.”

When asked about the outcomes, or results, of the partner activities for addressing the main issues of the affected community, of the twelve answering the question, six cited B2F's skills-building efforts for community residents.<sup>2</sup> For instance, one interviewee noted that six hundred people have been trained and employed in environmental jobs as a result of B2F efforts. Similarly, one interviewee cited development of a community-based resource—the still on-going apprenticeship center. Two other interviewees remarked that the partnership has provided the community with greater access to development opportunities. For instance, one interviewee remarked that B2F has linked local residents to local employment opportunities. This same interviewee further added that the partnership has prevented local residents from being driven out of the area because of area redevelopment. Another interviewee explained that B2F was having a very subtle impact for the affected community. Finally, one interviewee explained that it was difficult to gauge B2F's impact, because it lacked an appropriate baseline by which to measure, and another interviewee provided an ambiguous response.

When asked if they were satisfied with the outcomes of partnership activities so far, five out of the twelve who addressed this question answered positively. Three stated that they were very satisfied with some of the outcomes, for example, the aspects of job training, but were dissatisfied with the outcomes of other partnership activities including job placement results. Finally, four of the interviewees said that they would never be satisfied, but agreed that B2F was doing an excellent job with the resources they had.

When asked about the greatest success of the B2F Partnership ten of the fifteen interviewees addressing the topic cited the partnering with others and building of a network as the greatest success. For instance, one interviewee stated, “If you have a partnership you can accomplish darn near everything you want to.” Four stated that the B2F Partnership was fostered by equal commitment from all the partner members to the partnership goals, mutual respect for all the partners involved, and good communication between the partners. Four interviewees believed that the B2F Partnership decreases the amount of duplicative activities completed in the communities by partnering agencies and organizations. Three interviewees noted that the B2F Partnership approach offers more creative ideas to resolve difficult issues.

Eight of the fifteen interviewees cited B2F-sponsored job training as a success. Furthermore, seven of the twelve interviewees cited B2F's youth outreach programs as an important success. As one interviewee stated “We (B2F) are trying to match a person to the job they really want.” Other successes cited included: (1) community's increased understanding of the Navy Yard; (2) community's improved understanding that federal agencies care about what happens to them; and (3) federal agencies' improved understanding of the needs of the community.

### *Partnership Challenges*

When asked about the challenges facing the B2F Partnership nine of the fifteen interviewees addressing this topic cited the challenge of ensuring sufficient funding, specifically

---

<sup>2</sup> During the interview process, interviewees were asked questions about both the outcomes of partner activities, and the impact of activities for the affected communities. From the responses, it was clear that most interviewees viewed the partnership activities in terms of outcomes, not impact. Therefore, the term outcome is used throughout this discussion.

as it relates to administrative support. The interviewees stated that the B2F Partnership would benefit greatly from the establishment of an administrative support staff, however, there is no funding currently available, and David Ouderkirk, the executive director, currently does the majority of the administrative work alone. One interviewee stated that the lack of resources associated with the designation of the B2F Partnership as an IWG demonstration project was a challenge since more work accompanied the demonstration project designation. Finally, one interviewee said that the B2F Partnership did not establish itself as a 501(c)(3) non-profit status. An interviewee clarified by explaining that non-profit status would resolve funding issues within the partnership but it would not allow the federal employees to sit on the Executive Board. This would greatly hamper information sharing, a main activity of the partnership, between the community and the federal government.

Five of the fifteen interviewed agreed that the tragic events occurring on September 11, 2001 have affected the B2F Partnership. The B2F Partnership's workgroup and executive board meetings have been impacted since that date. Furthermore, there has been limited civilian access to the Navy Yard since that time. Finally, two interviewees said that the momentum that B2F had gained earlier was deflated a bit after the tragedy. Related to the events of September 11, was the rise of unemployment in the community surrounding the Naval Station immediately following. Some interviewees believe B2F helped relieve and improve this situation with programs already in place.

Four of the fifteen interviewees stated that the B2F Partnership needed to re-energize, and regain momentum. For instance, one stated that the B2F Partnership moved too slowly and needed "more action and less talk." Another interviewee mentioned that maintaining momentum without regularly scheduled meetings was difficult. Another stated that if the community's needs were not met quickly the residents' interest in the B2F Partnership would wane. Other difficulties cited included community outreach and partner recruitment.

When asked if different organizational styles were barriers to partnership success seven out of the eleven interviewees who addressed this topic said yes. Three cited the federal government's lack of ability to fund the partnership as a barrier to success. Two interviewees expressed concern generated by federal agencies' standard protocol which encourages regional staff, as opposed to headquarters staff, to take the lead in assisting in community-based efforts, even when the headquarters staff are already based in or near the affected community. One interviewee stated that the historically adversarial relationship between the District of Columbia and the federal government made it difficult for the two to effectively work together. Finally, one interview mentioned that it was impossible for federal employees to be on the executive board of a non-profit organization. She/he further explained that this barrier prevented B2F from switching to a non-profit status and assuring funding. Four interviewees, however, did not identify any organizational barriers, noting, instead that B2F's main purpose was to work around them.

Interviewees were also asked if there were conflicting federal regulations that limited the success of the partnership. Eleven out of the thirteen that answered the question said yes. Five mentioned the federal government's inability to neither legally finance the executive director position nor provide funds for B2F contractual support was a major barrier. One interviewee mentioned a particular instance when a federal agency was not able to provide a grant to a non-profit partner because of statutory restrictions. Finally two interviewees mentioned that the restriction prohibiting a federal employee from participating on a non-profit organization's executive board was a major barrier to B2F success.

### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Improving the Partnership*

When asked about ways to improve the B2F Partnership, twelve of the sixteen interviewees stated that B2F would benefit from an increase in funding and resources. Specifically nine interviewees explained that increased funding and resources to support administration work would significantly enhance the partnership. Similarly, three interviewees mentioned that increasing administrative capacity would greatly increase the success of the B2F Partnership. Along these lines, three interviewees mentioned the need for B2F to provide a set agenda before meetings to ensure a common basis of understanding from which to work. Seven recommended that the partnership establish a permanent time and location for meetings. As one interviewee stated "a way to improve this problem (scheduling conflicts) is to establish a permanent meeting location and set a permanent date (e.g., the first Tuesday of every other month)." She/he added that the permanent location should be a comfortable space and have parking availability. Two other interviewees, concerned about lack of all partners' email capacity, recommended that the partnership only use technology that every partner possesses to distribute pertinent information.

Three interviewees recommended soliciting greater direct input from the community before B2F-sponsored programs are initiated. To help do this, one interviewee noted that the B2F Partnership should establish an ombudsman for the community. Finally one interviewee mentioned the need to continue to break down the bureaucratic barriers in the federal system as a way to further improve the B2F Partnership.

### *Interviewees' Recommendations for Other Communities Using Partnerships*

When asked to provide recommendations for other communities interested in using partnership approaches to address environmental justice issues, eight of thirteen interviewees addressing this question suggested defining a clear vision statement and focusing on what the member organizations want to accomplish in the beginning stages of the partnership formation. They went on to say that it is necessary for communities to construct their partnership structure around this defined vision statement. Four interviewees stated that an agency should expect to donate money and time. Two expanded this by saying in initial stages of the partnership formation process, partners should require potential members to explain what resources their organization can supply to the partnership. Three went on to say the partnership should be inclusive, and open to all who want to participate with the understanding that every organization will have something to contribute.

Two interviewees recommended that communities using partnerships enlist the services of a strong facilitator and coordinator. Another remarked that the partnership should account for issues of member burnout. To avoid this she/he recommended that the member organizations rotate personnel who are the key contacts to the partnership. Another interviewee recommended that the partnership stay flexible since the flexibility within the B2F Partnership is what makes it successful. In addition, another interviewee cautioned other communities using partnerships to be aware that as the "level of expectation rises, the level of action seems to reduce."

Finally, two non-profit representatives advised other non-profit organizations to avoid expecting that entry into a partnership will result in increased funding. They further explained that non-profit organizations need to understand that a partnership, and resulting network, allows participating organizations to tap into a wide range of resources, only one of which may

be money. According to the interviewee, partnerships “will yield you gains”, but only if the non-profit organization believes in the partnership as a whole. In addition, she/he warned that non-profit groups cannot “circumvent the group for their own enhancement.”

#### *Value of the Collaborative Partnership*

When asked if the issues facing the affected community would have been addressed had the B2F Partnership not been formed thirteen of the fifteen interviewees who answered the question stated that the issues would not have been addressed to the same extent, if at all. Four remarked that the partnership model was the only way to fully address the issues facing the affected communities, and added that the services provided by individual organizations would have been fractured, inconsistent, and would not have received as much “buy-in” from the community. However, two interviewees felt that the community was empowered before the partnership came into being and, therefore, many issues were already being addressed. However, one of these interviewees acknowledged that B2F enhanced and focused the groups.

When asked about the value of addressing issues through a collaborative partnership approach, three of the fifteen interviewees who addressed this topic stated that the B2F Partnership provided a network of resources and contacts for support. Four mentioned that the partnership provided a structure for different organizations to pool their individual resources. Further, three others stated that this pooling of resources and increased communication between individual organizations reduced the redundancy of services provided to the affected community. Four interviewees said the B2F Partnership provided an excellent forum where community issues can be discussed. One went on to say that the partnership ensured community participation, specifically through the inclusion of non-profit community organizations. Two others mentioned that because all organizations were working together, this reduced the likelihood that one organization would take the lead within the community. Finally, one interviewee mentioned that the collaborative method was a “good vessel for the environmental justice campaign.”

Interviewees were asked if the B2F Partnership could be used to address similar issues that the community might face in the future. Eleven of the sixteen stated that the model could be used for future issues. Five thought that the collaborative model approach is the new way the government should do business. Two interviewees commented that the B2F membership has the expertise needed to cover many areas of the affected community and the uniqueness of this project is in its depth. Another interviewee went so far as to say the “collaborative is the only way to overcome classic bureaucratic barriers blocking good things from happening.” However, three interviewees were skeptical of the model. One mentioned that the approach is still untested. Another thought it was a good approach but still needed to be improved, and one thought that “we are too bureaucratically trained” for the collaborative model to continue to work.

#### *Value of Federal Involvement in the Partnership*

When asked about the effect of having federal agencies participate in the B2F Partnership, thirteen of the thirteen interviewees who answered the question had positive things to say. Ten stated that federal involvement has added credibility to the partnership. One explained that federal involvement in the collaboration validated the community’s concerns that a problem exists. Five stated that the federal government provides resources and expertise in the form of money, training, outreach programs, and accountability via documentation. Furthermore, two of those interviewees mentioned that federal involvement boosts community enthusiasm and increases the community’s organizational capacity. Three of the thirteen



interviewees stated that federal involvement results in greater information sharing between the community and other organizations.

When asked what the federal agencies gained by participating in the B2F Partnership, eight of the fourteen interviewees who answered stated that the federal agencies now have a greater understanding of the affected communities. Four clarified by stating that the B2F Partnership allows federal agencies to “see who in a community is benefiting from their mandates.” One said that the federal agencies “sometimes deal with policy rather than people,” and the collaborative process is helping the federal agencies better identify ways to help troubled communities. Three interviewees stated the agency activities performed collectively have a greater impact on the community. Two others mentioned that the collaborative process has helped the federal agencies identify the activities of other federal agencies in the community and therefore reduced redundancy of services provided.

Four interviewees stated that federal employees have gained job satisfaction from working within the B2F Partnership. They expanded by mentioning that they really enjoy this type of “hands on” work as well as the satisfaction received from seeing newly trained youth in their offices everyday. Another interviewee mentioned that the B2F Partnership has increased the visibility of the federal government within the affected community and that this has provided validation of the agencies’ work within the community. Finally one said that the collaborative process allows federal employees to expand the boundaries of traditional government work.

When asked whether federal agencies have been better able to coordinate their activities as a result on their involvement in the B2F Partnership, eleven out of eleven interviewees that answered responded positively. One interviewee stated that “every time agencies get together and understand how they can relate and what resources they each can bring to the table they are more likely to do it again.” Two others said that they are “gaining contacts and starting [partnership] spin-offs.” Another interviewee, however, remarked that while the partnership has increased coordination between agencies, it hasn’t directly resulted in improved coordination within his agency. Finally, one interviewee remarked that the partnership had resulted in increased coordination with staff and mid-level managers. She/he added, however, that some federal agency managers wanted their agencies to take credit for accomplishments that should be attributed to the B2F Partnership, and thus the partnership, according to the interviewee, could benefit from improved coordination.

Interviewees were also asked what federal agencies could do in order to better participate within community-based partnerships. Four out of the thirteen that answered this question thought it was necessary for the agency to provide the partnership with a point of contact, whose role would be to represent the agency in all the partnership activities while keeping the partnership’s mission in the minds of management. Two of these same interviewees mentioned that it was very important to pick the right person for this role, stressing that the representative needed to be energized and interested in the project. Two others mentioned providing flexibility under non-profit status regulations in order to allow the federal representatives to the B2F Partnership to continue to participate if the B2F Partnership officially organized into a non-profit.

Two interviewees mentioned that federal agencies should support the collaborative problem solving method at all levels within the member organization and structure themselves in a way that would facilitate their participation in partnership efforts. Along these lines, two interviewees stated that federal agencies need to better market use of collaborative approaches. They felt that this would increase federal agencies’ support for participation in

these efforts. Two remarked that federal agencies should understand that they are part of the community as well as the needs of that community when participating in partnerships. Two interviewees also stated that federal agencies need to be prepared to take risks and be able to cope with failure when partnering. One of these further suggested that agencies should not be afraid to invite the public onto their facilities and explain to them what role the agency plays in the community. Finally, one interviewee said that work assignment rotations should be incorporated into every government employee's job requirements in the hopes that the rotation will allow them to see how their decisions affect the "real world." She/he went on to say that federal agencies should be given incentives to participate in community-based partnerships.

### *Key Findings*

- The collaborative approach used by the B2F Partnership has allowed its member organizations to better ensure that some of the most disadvantaged members of Southeast and Southwest D.C. communities benefit from the recent development in the area and are not forced to relocate, particularly those living near the Washington Navy Yard. The majority of interviewees agreed that without the B2F Partnership it is unlikely that concerns of the disadvantaged community members would have been considered to the same extent.
- B2F has experienced substantial success since its inception in 1998, in leveraging resources, sharing information and resources, building job skills and identifying job opportunities for youth. All interviewees believe that the partnership has made a genuine effort to meet the B2F Partnership goals and that the issues most important to them were being addressed. The members of the B2F Partnership consider the on-going collaboration a success.
- B2F would benefit from a fully funded, executive director position and increased administrative support to ensure that it can continue its many positive efforts thus far. Funding would help to coordinate the partnership, advertise the partnership's activities and accomplishments both within the community and amongst potential members, and ensure that the partnership does not lose its momentum yet again.
- In part, the success of the B2F Partnership can be attributed to the strong, charismatic personalities involved. For example, many interviewees stated that the partnership would not have enjoyed the same level of success without the continuing effort of the executive director, David Ouderkirk, to maintain the lines of communication and act as organizer for the partnership. Interviewees also mentioned the importance of Admiral Weaver, a highly visible champion who increased the visibility and credibility of the B2F Partnership. It should be mentioned, however, that the B2F partners may rely too heavily upon these individuals, and that if they were to leave the partnership, B2F might not continue to be as effective.
- The operational structure within the B2F Partnership allows for a unique flexibility. Potential partners are able to come to the B2F Partnership with a proposed activity and as long as that activity coincides with B2F's overall goals the partnership will expand to perform that activity. The partnership members have a positive attitude and continuously look for ways they can help member organizations solve problems and attain goals rather than focusing on the reasons why a certain problem is impossible to solve.

- B2F continues to have the strong support of numerous and diverse partner organizations including federal agencies, city government, non-profit and community organizations, and academic universities.
- Although many interviewees listed measures that could be used to track the success of the B2F Partnership, no formal measurement and evaluation system is currently in place. It would benefit the partnership to institute a system to enable it to more systematically measure the group's progress towards achieving its goals, better focus resources, and more easily understand when to make programmatic changes. The partnership could also use the results of this measurement system to more easily communicate its accomplishments.

### *List of Interviewees*

Richard Allen	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Uwe Brandes	District of Columbia
Brian Christopher	Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center
Gentry Davis~	U.S. National Park Service
Camille Destafny	U.S. Navy
Judith Dobbins~	Covenant House D.C.
Christine Hart-Wright	Strive DC, Inc.
Linda Jackson	Building Bridges Across the River
David Ouderkirk	U.S. Navy
Randy Parker~	U.S. Department of Labor
Reginald Parrish	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mike Shannon~	Covenant House D.C.
Maxine Snowden~	U.S. National Park Service
Mike Wallach	Anacostia Economic Development Corporation
Babette Williams~	U.S. Department of Labor
Admiral Christopher Weaver	U.S. Navy

~Denotes that individual participated in a group interview.

## *Works Cited*

Bridges to Friendship Partnership, "Columbia Rising: A Series of Community Dialogues Approach." 7 May 2001.

Bridges to Friendship Partnership, "Vision, Mission, and Statement of Purpose," Memorandum. 4 June 2001.

Fountain, W.J., "Ward 8 In Profile: After Long Slide, Hope Peeks From Ruin," *Washingtonpost.com*. 28 May 1998.

Global Environment & Technology Foundation, "Bridges to Friendship Overview," Bridges to Friendship. 7 July 1998.

Global Environmental & Technology Foundation, "Community Empowerment Strategic Plan Outline," Bridges to Friendship. 10 July 1998.

Government of District of Columbia; Office of Planning, "Anacostia Waterfront Initiative," Welcome to Washington District of Columbia. 22 May 2002.  
<<http://www.planning.dc.gov/project/waterfront/index.shtm>>.

Halnon, Mary, "Opportunity: Race in Anacostia through the Civil War," *Crossing the River; Race, Geography, and the Federal Government in Anacostia*. 21 May 2002.  
<<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ANACOSTIA/early.html>>.

Halnon, Mary, "The Changing Face of Anacostia: Public Housing and Urban Renewal," *Crossing the river; Race, Geography, and the Federal Government in Anacostia*. 21 May 2002. <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ANACOSTIA/public.html>>.

Ouderkirk, David, Naval District Washington; Executive Director, Bridges to Friendship, Electronic Communication. 21 January 2003.

Ouderkirk, David, Naval District Washington; Executive Director, Bridges to Friendship, Phone Interview. 21 January 2003.

Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Inc., "History of Southwest DC." 14 May 2002.  
<[www.swdc.org/history.htm](http://www.swdc.org/history.htm)>.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HUD Helps Create Jobs and Revitalize SE Washington To Help President's DC Economic Development Plan Succeed." 12 March 1997.  
<<http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf18/pressrel/pr97-28.html>>.

Washington, DC: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, "Washington's Neighborhoods." 21 May 2002. <[Http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dcneighbor.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dcneighbor.htm)>.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> W.J. Fountain, "Ward 8 In Profile: After Long Slide, Hope Peeks From Ruin," *Washingtonpost.com*. 28 May 1998.
- <sup>2</sup> Washington, DC: A National Register of Historic Places Travel Itinerary, "Washington's Neighborhoods." 21 May 2002. <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/wash/dcneighbor.htm>>.
- <sup>3</sup> Mary Halnon, "Opportunity: Race in Anacostia through the Civil War," *Crossing the River; Race, Geography, and the Federal Government in Anacostia*. 21 May 2002. <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ANACOSTIA/early.html>>.
- <sup>4</sup> Mary Halnon, "The Changing Face of Anacostia: Public Housing and Urban Renewal," *Crossing the river; Race, Geography, and the Federal Government in Anacostia*. 21 May 2002. <<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/ANACOSTIA/public.html>>.
- <sup>5</sup> Fountain, p. 1.
- <sup>6</sup> Southwest Neighborhood Assembly, Inc., "History of Southwest DC." 14 May 2002. <[www.swdc.org/history.htm](http://www.swdc.org/history.htm)>.
- <sup>7</sup> "The Changing Face of Anacostia: Public Housing and Urban Renewal," p. 1.
- <sup>8</sup> "History of Southwest DC." p 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Fountain. p. 1.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development, "HUD Helps Create Jobs and Revitalize SE Washington To Help President's DC Economic Development Plan Succeed." 12 March 1997. <<http://www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf18/pressrel/pr97-28.html>>.
- <sup>12</sup> Global Environment & Technology Foundation, "Bridges to Friendship Overview," *Bridges to Friendship*. 7 July 1998.
- <sup>13</sup> David Ouderkirk, Naval District Washington; Executive Director, Bridges to Friendship, Phone Interview, 21 January 2003.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Bridges to Friendship Partnership, "Vision, Mission, and Statement of Purpose," Memorandum . 4 June 2001.
- <sup>16</sup> Global Environmental & Technology Foundation, "Community Empowerment Strategic Plan Outline," *Bridges to Friendship*. 10 July 1998. p. 3.
- <sup>17</sup> Bridges to Friendship Partnership, "Columbia Rising: A Series of Community Dialogues Approach." 7 May 2001.
- <sup>18</sup> Government of District of Columbia; Office of Planning, "Anacostia Waterfront Initiative," *Welcome to Washington District of Columbia*. 22 May 2002. <<http://www.planning.dc.gov/project/waterfront/index.shtm>>.
- <sup>19</sup> David Ouderkirk, Naval District Washington; Executive Director, Bridges to Friendship, Electronic Communication, 21 January 2003.