

Wild Plum Center for Young Children & Families – Success Story

When we began working with SVP in 2008, our organization, Wild Plum Center for Young Children & Families, was highly focused on program implementation, but not on long-term sustainability, nor position within the community. Through the rewarding, collaborative efforts working with SVP, we were able to achieve effective organization allowing for the development of a much needed strategic plan. Creating this plan was a large-scale, time-intensive project. Led by five SVP partners, the process included meeting with parents of children in the program; and also talking with community members, board, and staff, gathering their invaluable input regarding the program’s future. In order to best obtain authentic feedback from all our parents, meetings were held in both English and Spanish. With guidance from our SVP partners, we further conducted a market analysis of the providers in our service area to determine expansion needs. The end result was a comprehensive, strategic plan inclusive of clear, measurable goals, market research, and expansion opportunities. Each of our five key goals has already yielded significant results, such as we would never have previously expected to attain.

One of our primary objectives was to provide a broader continuum of services, expanding our age range from 3-5 to 0-5 years. The completion of our plan corresponded with the timely release of a federal grant. Positioned as we were by the hard work and strategic planning facilitated by SVP, we were able to apply for, and were awarded, \$965,000 for the purpose of including 0-3 year olds in our program. Without our partnership with SVP, we would not have been prepared to apply for such a large grant, one that would impact our program so significantly, and allow us to achieve a central, meaningful goal.

Other key areas of focus aimed to increase our program’s brand identity and funding. This was to be accomplished by hiring a Development Director, and through the creation of a new organizational identity. Funding from SVP enabled us to hire our Development Director, a crucial step. Additionally, we’ve been able to implement a branding process resulting in increased community awareness of our program, now renamed Wild Plum Center.

Today, we are seeing an unsettling trend in our community, where non-profits are caught off guard by changes in the school district. These changes can result in non-profits losing funding previously received from the school district, thereby losing families in their programs. Fortunately, the strategic planning process we completed with SVP has positioned us to weather changes in the school district with little or no impact on our program and the families we serve. If the school district reduces funding or increases its level of competition for servicing the families we have historically served, we now have the capacity to flex our age range to continue to maintain the same number of children and families who can benefit from all we have to offer.