The Esperanza Center-Community Advisory Board
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- The Esperanza Center is a comprehensive resource center that produces medical, dental, legal, education, anti-trafficking and family reunification services to immigrant families living in Baltimore county.
- The Community Advisory Board is designed to be a thirteen-member committee, created to receive feedback about the current services provided by the Esperanza Center.
- It also aims to better understand the needs of immigrant families in Baltimore and create innovative solutions to address them.

SCHOLAR ACTIVITIES

- I drafted pages of literature review researching best practices for a community advisory board, which have informed the current committee structure and practices going forward.
- Based on literature review, the Community Advisory Board is designed to be a twelve-member committee, made up of current Esperanza Center clientele, Esperanza Center volunteers, community partners providing similar services to the EC, and one meeting facilitator.
- Based on literature review, the board planned to meet monthly for at least 3 months for 90 minutes each
- I created recruitment materials in Spanish and English for all potential committee members, being sensitive to the differing literacy and education levels among these individuals.
- I recruited and trained two bilingual medical and public health student volunteers to assist in facilitating the committee meetings.
- I co-created the advisory board's bylaws. Recently, Nicole independently applied for and acquired an outside funding source to support the EC in these efforts.
- I identified an external funding source to award the Esperanza Center to support the Community Advisory Board

OUTCOMES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- A 15-page document of literature review regarding best practices for a community advisory board was created
- A pamphlet was created for Esperanza Center clients
- A recruitment email with google form application sheet was created for community partners
- A recruitment email with google form application sheet was created for Esperanza Center volunteers.
- A bylaws document was created outlining the structure, rules, regulations, and expectations of the board for all members.
- A template agenda was created for each session:
  
  **Sample Agenda:**
  1. Introductions
  2. Why an advisory board?/Reflections from last session
  3. Presentation of a discussion topic, open question, or problem statement (i.e. How can we improve customer service?)
  4. Group discussion
  5. Proposals/resolutions
  6. Summary
  7. Adjournment

- Two bi-lingual volunteers were recruited to help the meetings
- An external funding source awarded the Esperanza Center $2,500 to support the Community Advisory Board and the programs that were created inspired by the board’s discussions, feedback, and advice for the Center.
- A one-hour information session was scheduled on 3/18/2020 for Esperanza Center clients to learn more about the Community Advisory Board, have their questions answered, and recruit volunteers for the Board.
- We also had our first Community Advisory Board meeting scheduled for 4/1/2020.
- Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we were unable to complete our information session or meetings.

LESSONS LEARNED

- We learned to always have a contingency plan in the case that individuals are not able to meet at the same time in the same room.
- Examples of contingency plans include holding group video chats (via Skype or Zoom) or hosting group messaging chats.
- These contingency plans are not only helpful in the setting of COVID-19, in which groups of individuals are not able to meet at once, but also in situations in which Board members live in different locations or have differing schedules. Therefore, it is imperative to always have a contingency plan no matter what.
- We learned the important ways we can support our community and complete community outreach virtually:
  - Website design or support
  - Data entry
  - Email marketing or management
  - Fundraising phone calls and outreach
  - Social media promotion and management
  - App development