

# Glades Community Development Corporation

a chronicle of  
a community  
development  
intermediary



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Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago is a policy research center dedicated to bringing sound information, rigorous analyses, innovative ideas, and an independent, multidisciplinary perspective to the policies and programs affecting children, their families, and the communities in which they live.

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On the cover: Photographs depict workers planting sugar cane by hand and the shore of Lake Okeechobee, South Bay.

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## PREFACE

This report is a chronicle and analysis of the development of the Glades Community Development Corporation. GCDC is a local intermediary—an organization serving as catalyst and coach for comprehensive and sustainable community development. GCDC is dedicated to improving the quality of life in the Glades, an area encompassing three small cities and extensive farmland in South Florida.



Welcome sign and sugar cane at Twenty Mile Bend on Highway 441

This report is the culmination of a project, begun in 1993, designed to document the progress made and challenges encountered by GCDC. Earlier reports provided an outside perspective for two audiences: the Board, staff, and other participants in GCDC activity, and the GCDC funders—the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation of Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and, for the first several years, the Bernard van Leer Foundation. Unlike the internal documents generated previously, this report, made possible by generous additional support from the MacArthur and Mott Foundations, is intended to reach an audience that includes not only GCDC and its funders, but also members of the Glades community, practitioners and researchers involved in comprehensive community initiatives, and funders and policy makers with an interest in community development.

We aim to portray GCDC's evolution as a local intermediary and the effects of its efforts in the Glades. The use of local intermediaries in community development initiatives poses a number of challenges and is still relatively rare, which means that GCDC and its funders had to face these challenges with little in the way of precedent as a guide. We have therefore described not only GCDC's accomplishments but also these challenges because of their importance in charting, for GCDC and others, the new and demanding course taken by GCDC. Though GCDC is still very much a work in progress, we use June 1, 1998 as our cut-off date.

The story unfolds here in three ways. A narrative tells GCDC's history: how it began, how it evolved, the challenges it encountered and the accomplishments it produced, and the lessons that can be drawn from its experience as a local intermediary. The narrative appears on white paper with black ink. Profiles of particular projects or initiatives accompany the narrative, providing detailed portraits of specific aspects of the GCDC experience. The profiles appear in colored boxes. Finally, photographs illustrate and complete the story.

We hope that this report will be useful to other initiatives and those interested in them, and to GCDC and its funders as they continue their ambitious and admirable efforts in the Glades.

# Prologue: A Guide to the Glades

Drive west from West Palm Beach on State Road 441. There is a break in the landscape, as miles of new, indistinguishable strip malls give way to agricultural lands. You pass a sign that boldly proclaims Twenty Mile Bend as the gateway to the Glades. For the next twenty miles, until you reach Belle Glade, the first of the Glades' three cities, you see only farmland from horizon to horizon.



Sugar, rice, citrus fruit, corn, black gold

The Glades lies in western Palm Beach County, the largest and wealthiest county in Florida. Home to over 36,000 people, the Glades includes three cities—Belle Glade, South Bay, and Pahokee—and the outlying unincorporated areas of agricultural land. Located in subtropical southeastern Florida, the Glades has a climate considered by many to be ideal: the average annual temperature is 75 degrees,

with the summer temperature averaging 82 degrees and the winter 67 degrees. Two features dominate the landscape: hundreds of thousands of acres of flat farmland and the southeastern shore of Lake Okeechobee.

Palm Beach County is Florida's—and one of the nation's—leading agricultural areas, with 564,000 acres under cultivation. More than 425,000 of these acres lie in the Glades, producing sugar cane, citrus fruit, vegetables, rice, and sod grass. The fertile soil, a deep layer of rich organic matter over sand and limestone—locally labeled “black gold” or “muck”—supports this intense agricultural use. The welcome sign to Belle Glade proudly proclaims, “Her soil is her fortune.”

Just outside any of the Glades' three cities, the landscape of rich black soil and green blades of sugar cane seem to stretch endlessly, interrupted only by the outlines of



Sugar refinery, Belle Glade

immense sugar mills. The first wave of farm settlements in the area in the early part of this century began the cultivation of sugar cane. Florida today leads the country in the production of raw sugar from sugar cane: the 1991/92 crop (the latest for which data are available) produced 15.5 million tons of cane yielding 1.7 million tons of raw sugar and 10 million gallons of blackstrap molasses worth about \$1.5 billion. Planting begins in August, and the cane grows for twelve to eighteen months. Harvesting and processing take place from October through March.

Lake Okeechobee, nicknamed “Nature’s Playground,” is the second largest freshwater lake inside U.S. boundaries. It serves as the source of water for the Everglades and acts as a flood control safety valve for most of South Florida. Water flows through a series of canals and pumping stations into the lake during the rainy season and



Dike around Lake Okeechobee

back out during the dry season. The lake is connected to both coasts by means of canals. A 110-mile levee called the Hoover Dike surrounds the lake. Authorities constructed the dike in response to the immense destruction caused by a 1928 hurricane that killed 2,000 people in Belle Glade. Another hurricane devastated the Glades in 1947, leading to an extension of the dike. In addition to protecting these communities, the dike is now being developed into the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. Walkers, horseback riders, bikers, joggers, nature observers, and tourists will use this scenic corridor for their education and enjoyment. The lake itself supports a growing fishing and boating industry. Indeed, the lake enjoys international fame for its bass fishing. In the Glades, an emerging tourist industry centers on Lake Okeechobee; however, the paucity of necessary support facilities, such as restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters, retards this growth.

The three cities of the Glades were all established in the second decade of this century. South Bay was founded at the head of the North River Canal in 1917. Now a center for vegetable production and packing, the city has a population of about 4,000. Belle Glade is the largest

of the three cities, with a population of about 17,000. It was founded in 1919 at the head of the Hillsboro Canal, and it has grown into a center of sugar production. Pahokee was founded in 1914, and now has a population around 7,000.

Of the 36,125 people who live in the Glades, 60 percent are black, 29 percent are white, and 11 percent are of other races.<sup>1</sup> According to the 1990 Census, Hispanics, primarily of Mexican and Cuban origin, account for 21 percent of the population; unofficial estimates put the Haitian population at about 5 percent of the total. A small Arab population also contributes to the mix. This racial and ethnic diversity is accompanied by economic diversity: a middle class of professionals, farm managers, educators, gov-



Rooming house for migrant workers, Belle Glade

ernment workers, and small business owners, as well as the unemployed and working poor, including migrant and seasonal farm workers, people the socioeconomic landscape. The Florida Glades Community Rural Empowerment Zone (EZ) Application prepared in June 1994 describes the poverty of the area:

The diverse people who together form the heart and soul of the Glades community are faced with unequalled poverty, health problems, and economic adversity,

both historical and current. Poverty in the Glades is among the worst of any rural area in the United States . . . This startling fact is borne out by Census data showing that 75 percent of Glades children under five years [living in stressed areas in the Glades] live in poverty compared with 49 percent in south central Los Angeles and 60 percent in inner city Washington, D.C. . . . The human suffering in terms of deep poverty [in the Glades] is dramatic and pervasive.

The following 1990 Census data illustrate these conditions:<sup>2</sup>

**1990 Census Data**

	<b>Palm Beach County</b>	<b>Glades</b>
Population	863,500	24,848
Median household income	\$32,524	\$15,940
Percentage of persons living below poverty line	9.3	37.7
Percentage of persons unemployed	5.1	18.9
Percentage of adults with high school graduation or above	78.0	40.0



Kitchen in rooming house

Agriculture in general and sugar in particular serve as a substantial employment anchor in the Glades. The Florida Department of Labor estimates that nearly 70 percent of all jobs in the Glades area relate directly to the agricultural industry. Yet even the apparently robust sugar economy faces serious challenges: some predict that the soil will be exhausted in a decade or so; environmentalists seek to enact strict regulatory legislation about the nature of runoff from the fields of sugar cane; substantial federal subsidies of sugar are threatened; and, if it becomes accessible, foreign sugar is likely to sell for significantly less. In 1994 the U.S. Sugar Corporation's decision to close South Bay Growers, its vegetable farming and marketing subsidiary, resulted in layoffs for more than 1,300 full-time and seasonal workers. This decision created significant dislocation for South Bay, whose next largest business had 30 year-round employees. It also highlighted the already pressing need to diversify the economic base of the area and develop a more skilled workforce. Prisons and correctional facilities represent a significant growth industry in the Glades, currently accounting for an estimated 800 jobs. But many of the jobs they generate—like



The Loading Zone Area: the site in Belle Glade where farm workers assemble early in the morning to be transported by school bus to the fields

middle-income administrative and professional jobs in other sectors—are filled by skilled workers who live outside of the Glades.

The Glades has an abundance of resources—fertile agricultural land, a wonderful climate, easy access to a magnificent lake, and a population that is racially, ethnically, and economically



Glades Correctional Facility, Belle Glade

diverse. At the same time inhabitants of the region face significant poverty, limited opportunities, and isolation from the dynamic growth and prosperity experienced in the rest of Palm Beach County. These contradictions pose important challenges for designing a community development strategy for the Glades.

# Background and History

Communities, and community development, have increasingly been a focus of policy attention and action in recent years. This is the result of several factors—a growing interest in the economic, social, and political roles of community in contemporary society; a growing recognition of the importance of communities in the lives of their residents; and a growing appreciation of the potential of communities as arenas for effective and sustained action. Many policy makers, foundation and government officials, leaders of nonprofit organizations, and citizens believe democracy depends on strong communities that have the capacity to realize the collective aspirations of their citizens. This capacity, in turn, depends on the existence and use of an array of community assets—strong community organizations, effective leadership, access to resources, and an engaged citizenry. These assets are distributed unevenly from one community to the next. Moreover, the gap between economically rich and poor communities grows steadily. These inequities mean that some communities are unable to provide the educational and economic opportunities families need to sustain themselves, the social supports they need to thrive, and the voice they need to represent their interests effectively in the larger society.

Community building initiatives and community development organizations come in a number of forms. Some focus on a particular arena of action, such as improvement of housing stock, provision of social services, or development of businesses and jobs. The approach to community development chosen for the Glades is the local intermediary. As its name suggests, the local intermediary mediates—among individuals and groups in the community, and between the community and the world outside. The local intermediary does not directly provide housing, services, or jobs. Increasing community capacity for substantial and sustainable development is its starting point, overarching purpose, and enduring focus. This entails the development, across all sectors and levels of the community, of strong leaders, effective organizations and collaborations; development of the means to use existing resources more effectively and to access new resources; and development of the ability to engage individuals and groups in problem solving around common interests and concerns. Although these accomplishments are less tangible and immediate than housing, services, or other possible products of community development, they, and the intermediary approach, have significant potential for engendering substantial community change over the long run—including, indirectly, the creation of more and better housing, jobs, and services. For all of these reasons, the local intermediary approach is one of the most promising forms of community development. This report is the story of one such organization that is now in its seventh year.

## HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF THE GLADES COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Officially the Glades Community-Based Development Project, later to be incorporated as the Glades Community Development Corporation, began in June 1991, when it received three-year funding commitments from four foundations: the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, the Bernard van Leer Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. But the story begins two years earlier.

In early 1989 the Community Foundation's assets reached \$7 million. At that time, the Foundation Board's Chair, Dwight Allison, and Executive Director, Shannon Sadler, felt that the Foundation could begin to initiate some grantmaking, rather than focus entirely on responding to grant proposals. Although the Foundation had funded some small grant requests from the Glades, it knew that a much more significant investment would be required to address the serious problems facing this area. Community leaders, both inside and outside the Glades, were beginning to speak up. They portrayed the Glades as isolated physically, socially and economically from the rest of Palm Beach County—that is, from the Coast—and from the private and public power brokers whose decisions affected the nature of opportunity in the Glades. For decades, the Glades had suffered from a negative reputation in the media. In 1960, Edward R. Murrow's award-winning *Harvest of Shame* used the Glades to illustrate the terrible plight of migrant workers in the United States. In 1990, Dr. Deanna James, then Director of the Public Health Unit in Belle Glade, announced to the press that the Glades had one of the highest AIDS rates in the country and challenged the County's leaders to take seriously the economic and social problems facing the area.

Over the course of a year beginning in early 1989, Sadler and the Foundation's newly hired program officer, Louise Grant, made numerous visits to the Glades. They developed relationships with different segments of the community while bringing potential funders and other resource people to the Glades to obtain a firsthand picture of the community. Dr. Dorothy Peck, West Area District Administrator for the School Board of Palm Beach County and member of the Board of the Community Foundation, helped to organize a series of meetings between the Foundation and community leaders. Together they began to shape



Louise Grant and Shannon Sadler of the Community Foundation

a vision for change. However, building trust proved to be a challenge. On the one hand, based on past experience, people in the Glades had little reason to believe that those from the Coast would do anything other than come in, tell them what to do, and then disappear in a year. On the other hand, funders and others from outside the Glades were often overwhelmed by the apparent intransigence of the problems facing the Glades and by the low probability of addressing these problems effectively. Negative press continued to stigmatize the people in the Glades and to reinforce the cultural and psychological separation of the area from the rest of the County. Vested interests, racism, poverty, and hopelessness all contributed to resistance to change.

Sadler understood that significant resources requiring multiple funders would be needed to bring about meaningful change in the Glades. The Community Foundation enlisted the assistance of Fred Wood of the Bernard van Leer Foundation, who expressed interest in funding in the Glades if the Community Foundation could attract other foundation support. With this help, Sadler and Allison aimed to involve the Mott and MacArthur Foundations in a funding partnership. These two national foundations had historical financial interests in Palm Beach County. Moreover, they found the opportunities in the Glades compelling and the funding partnership consistent with their institutional agendas. As a result, the MacArthur, Mott, and van Leer foundations agreed to join the Community Foundation to support a seven-month community assessment process. This began in July 1990 with the opening of a project office in the Glades.

The heart of the community assessment process was a survey that solicited residents' ideas about improving life in the Glades. With the help of the Glades Interagency Network, a consortium of public and nonprofit health and human service providers, project staff designed the survey and administered it in more than forty area neighborhoods using local residents as interviewers. The second major instrument of the assessment was data collection from provider agencies and community leaders. These two efforts served interrelated purposes: to introduce the project in the Glades and to involve individuals and organizations in an initial participatory planning process. The final product was a proposal to the four funders to create the Glades Community-Based Development Project, a comprehensive and integrated approach to development. Its mission statement: *to enable people in the Glades communities to design and implement sustainable solutions to their problems and to mobilize financial, human and political resources, both within and outside the Glades, to support these efforts.*

The proposal described the core principles that would drive the Project's approach:

- It must take a holistic approach, encompassing health, education, economic and social development and the relationships among these domains
- It must engage the community in defining, designing, and implementing solutions
- It must build institutional capacity and leadership
- It must promote public dialogue among the diverse constituencies that make up the Glades
- It must leverage resources from county, state, national, and international bodies

The Glades initiative officially began when the four funders accepted the proposed plan and awarded the Project three-year grants to be administered through the Community Foundation.

## THE GLADES PROJECT AS A LOCAL INTERMEDIARY

Recent analyses of the complex demands generated by comprehensive community change initiatives suggest that new structures are needed to help support and manage the change process.<sup>3</sup> One such structure is a local community-based intermediary. A local intermediary is a vehicle for building community capacity for development. The local intermediary engages diverse community stakeholders in the process of planning and implementing change and helps them to identify strategic opportunities to advance the community's agenda. Both the stakeholders and the opportunities may lie within or outside the commu-

nity. Thus, an intermediary must be embedded in the community and it must have strong ties with actors, resources, and decision-making processes outside the community. While there is no uniform template for such an organization, there is some consensus among those involved in developing, funding, and participating in community change initiatives about what functions a local intermediary can serve:

- It can convene and stimulate productive and informed dialogue among diverse community constituencies
- It can demonstrate the value of and strategies for engaging community residents, particularly those who traditionally have not had a significant voice, in all aspects of community problem solving
- It can build the institutional infrastructure of the community
- It can integrate leadership development into every action it undertakes
- It can broker access to previously untapped resources and opportunities for the needs of the community
- It can champion the community's interests and ensure that the community's voice is heard in forums outside the community

The local intermediary model for community development seemed particularly valuable for a community like the Glades.<sup>4</sup> The intermediary approach is designed to address many of the key problems found there. A relatively undeveloped institutional infrastructure, a lack of critical mass in strong and visible leadership, and physical and social isolation have all limited the Glades' access to resources and opportunities. Significant racial, ethnic, and economic divisions within the community, as well as the historic competition for resources among the three municipalities, meant that there was little sense of common interest and little tradition of public dialogue. These factors limited the Glades' political capital as well as its access to philanthropic assistance. Those foundations receptive to funding in the Glades usually encountered difficulty identifying projects in which they could have confidence that their investments would be used effectively or would make any lasting difference.

Under these conditions, any substantial new enterprise in the Glades would need to build a consensus that broad-scale development was possible: that an agenda for change *could* be developed among diverse constituencies, capacity *could* be built and resources identified to implement this agenda, and the process of change *could* itself be sustainable over the long run. A local engine for change needed to be created, a civic catalyst that had a reach deep, wide, and powerful enough, both in and outside the Glades, to foster a range of development activities.

These were the hopes expressed at the inception of the Glades Project; these were some of the factors that led those involved in designing the Project toward an intermediary model. But there were few examples nationally of community intermediaries like the one envisioned, few lessons to guide the implementation of such an enterprise. As one funder put it, "We didn't even know what we didn't know." Thus, the Glades Project would have both the opportunity for groundbreaking success and the need to face the uncharted challenges of the pioneer.

# Program Development

## INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION, 1991-1994

Building relationships with a diverse array of individuals, networks, and organizations was a primary task as GCDC<sup>5</sup> began its work in the Glades. Staff and Board members used every new contact and every GCDC activity to learn about the interests and priorities of residents and other community stakeholders. They used every opportunity to describe GCDC's goals and plans. Outreach took many forms, from informal conversations at schools and churches to presentations to local public officials, from sponsorship of cultural events to support for existing community improvement efforts. Three interrelated activities predominated during the early years: organizational outreach and support, public forums and dialogue, and grantmaking. While GCDC decided to limit its grantmaking following this initial period of program development, the first two activities remain at the heart of GCDC's agenda today.

### Organizational Outreach and Support

A key role for GCDC as an intermediary has involved building the institutional infrastructure of the community by strengthening existing organizations, helping start new organizations as needed, and promoting new relationships and collaborations among organizations within the community and between those in the community and outside. GCDC has operationalized this role in several ways, including providing technical assistance in a variety of forms to a variety of organizations, engendering and participating in partnerships and collaborative activities, and cultivating relationships with resources and opportunities outside the Glades.

**Technical assistance.** GCDC staff report that a constant stream of requests comes through the office each week: requests for suggestions of people to serve on emerging nonprofit boards and community-wide groups, requests for planning and development assistance, and requests from organizations outside the community for brokering advice and guidance. GCDC has provided technical assistance to many grassroots groups in different forms:

- Assistance in developing by-laws and applying for nonprofit tax status
- Free meeting space and access to office equipment (fax, copying machine, computer)
- Help in identifying funding opportunities and developing proposals, including access to GCDC's Foundation Resource Library
- Workshops on issues of interest like community conflict mediation, networking, and proposal development
- Arrangements for Glades residents to attend training sessions and conferences outside the Glades

In addition, GCDC has provided a more sustained form of technical assistance to selected organizations, serving as fiscal agent for organizations that do not have their own nonprofit tax status. Some of these organizations are incubated by GCDC and go on to get their own

nonprofit status; some are grassroots groups for whom incorporation is either not feasible or not a high priority; and some are collaborations or entities that simply need a funding conduit.

GCDC staff provide another form of technical assistance through their service on numerous state, county, and local boards, committees, and task forces. Besides assisting these groups, GCDC staff have benefited by being able to reach into new networks, to learn more about the concerns and perspectives of different groups, and to identify new resources for the community.

**Partnerships and collaborations.** Organizational outreach has taken the form of partnerships and collaborative activity with existing groups in the Glades. Many of these partnerships undertaken early in GCDC's development were designed to reinforce a sense of community identity and pride and to lay the groundwork for further action. They include the following:

- GCDC co-sponsored a Shop at Home campaign complete with buttons and bumper stickers (“We spend our Bucks in the Cities on the Muck”) with the Glades Chamber of Commerce and local merchants.
- GCDC co-sponsored the Tri-Cities Glades Community Clean-Up Campaign, in which more than 70 youth and adults started at 7:00 a.m. in targeted areas in the three communities and ended with lunch at a local restaurant.
- GCDC staff worked with the thirteen schools in the Glades on a Glades Area Community Teacher Appreciation Week. This venture built on GCDC's earlier work in the schools, which involved organizing volunteer teams in each elementary school to help school administrators register students and ensure that families received the services to which they were entitled.
- GCDC co-sponsored with PATCH (Planned Approach to Community Health, an organization devoted to improving health in the Glades) and several other local and county entities a day-long Families Forum. Seven individuals were honored for their contributions to family and community life in the Glades. The awardees included those who had raised children who became community leaders despite difficult odds, and residents who had made special contributions to the community, such as leading voter registration activities or acting as advocate or interpreter for Haitian residents.

## GCDC Timeline

**1989**

Community Foundation (CF) and Glades leaders start planning

**1990**

CF, MacArthur, Mott, and van Leer Foundations fund 7-month community assessment

Glades Community-Based Development Project opens an office in the Glades

**1991**

CF and the three foundations commit three years of support to GCDC

Advisory Board formed

**1992**

GCDC awards first Discretionary Rapid Response Grants

Glades Board approves Project mission statement

First Board retreat

**1993**

GCDC commits funding to Health Department for the Med-Mobile

GCDC funds Grief and Loss program

Glades Economic Summit

GCDC board and staff begin series of site visits outside the Glades

**1994**

Community Assets survey conducted

Local city charrettes begun

Agricultural Summit

Glades First Families Forum

Glades Area Youth Speak-Out

Transition Management Board established

**1995**

GCDC receives its own nonprofit status, establishes independence from the CF

GCDC adopts strategic plan and obtains further core support

Glades Second Families Forum and Rural Initiatives Conference

Western Communities Tourism Alliance established

HIPPY program established in Belle Glade and Pahokee

Med-Mobile begins operation

YFDA youth survey conducted

Business incubator study conducted and planning begun

**1996**

Vision to Action begins

YFDA provides support for three youth groups

Empowerment Evaluation Workshops begin

Citizen Planner Series conducted

GCDC receives Core Regions Grant for City infrastructure development

**1997**

EDGE Center opens

Glades Guild formed

**1998**

Business Loan Fund becomes operational

Glades Youth Council formed

Youth Entrepreneurial Project and Youth Leadership Development Initiative begin

Acting on the Vision begins

Potluck in the Muck organized

**Cultivating relationships outside the Glades.** GCDC staff and Board members have cultivated numerous resources and opportunities from outside the Glades. One means they have employed to make these connections is tours of the Glades conducted for funders and other organizations in and beyond Palm Beach County. The staff's and board's actions have increased awareness of and knowledge about the Glades and brought new resources into the area. For example, while the Children's Services Council, the County's mechanism for planning and funding programs for children, traditionally sponsored proposal development sessions only on the Coast, GCDC staff identified possible training sites and successfully advocated for holding sessions in the Glades. GCDC also helped to bring the Boys and Girls Club of Palm Beach County to the Glades by enabling the organization to gain access to some community development funds earmarked by the County for the Glades. GCDC staff provided temporary office space to the Club's new employee in the Glades, introduced him to relevant community people, and assisted him in efforts to establish a community board. Also brought to the Glades through GCDC's efforts was PACE (Practical Academic Cultural Education Center for Girls), a comprehensive service program for troubled adolescent girls.



The Med-Mobile

## Med-Mobile

You have a medical problem:

You are 78 years old, homebound, and worried about your blood pressure. Your house is three miles from the clinic. How do you get help in monitoring your condition?

You are a caring parent who wants his son to have an annual physical, including immunizations and a test for lead poisoning. But you have no car. How do you get to the doctor?

In June of 1992, your options for obtaining health care in the Glades were limited. In June of 1998, you have another choice: the "doctor" will come to you in the guise of the Glades Med-Mobile, also called the "Sugarland Express—The Doctor Bus." The Med-Mobile will come to you at the Job Services site, at South Bay Housing, at St. Mary's, at Gove Elementary School, at the Senior Center, at the Haitian Center, at the Loading Zone area, at Tiny's Liquor, at Foodland, at the South Bay Pharmacy, at East Coast Migrant Head Start . . . Hours vary from one day to the next in order to provide maximum access: mornings and afternoons here, afternoons and evenings there. To improve awareness and increase access, the Med-Mobile Program publishes a newsletter, *The Sugarland Express Local*, which provides a monthly calendar of visits and information about staff and services.

The Med-Mobile is a health facility on wheels. Medical examination rooms, interview rooms for health screening and education, medical diagnostic equipment, and a small waiting room roll to you. More importantly, the Med-Mobile's appearance means that an entire medical team has arrived: an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, a Licensed Practical Nurse, a senior clerk, and a health support specialist. These resources provide acute care for adults and children, immunizations, physical examinations, preventive health screenings, STD testing and counseling, family planning, tuberculosis testing, eligibility determination for health care, and health education. The Med-Mobile Program aims to provide "culturally sensitive comprehensive health care, health education, and other outreach activities to the unserved and underserved residents within their communities." Services target the poor and working poor, including seasonal and migrant farm workers, and their families: all people who have difficulty accessing health care because of financial, social, and transportation barriers. The Med-Mobile's brochure reflects the ethnic diversity of the people of the Glades as it proclaims in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole that "it is our belief that a healthy individual leads to a healthy community."

In 1992, the Health Subcommittee of the GCDC Board proposed a medical-ly equipped vehicle as one response to the need for more accessible health care, a need determined by a community survey and follow-up community forums. Medical personnel, who saw an increasing number of families going to the emergency room



Clinic sign in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole

Another strategy for connecting to outside resources has involved site visits to model programs in other parts of the country and, in the early years, to other countries—such as Jamaica and Trinidad—which were home to projects funded by the van Leer Foundation. GCDC teams of staff, Board members, and sometimes students or community leaders, brought back from these visits new ideas and new relationships that often led to the development of new projects.

## Public Forums and Dialogue

GCDC staff developed varied strategies for reaching different segments of the community, for promoting forums for groups to meet and talk with each other and, for soliciting the participation of other organizations in these efforts. This approach was seen as essential in a community with many longstanding divisions among groups, with large numbers of people whose voices were seldom heard, and with little tradition of civic dialogue. The following forums illustrate this approach:

- **Economic Summit.** For the first time public officials and citizens came together to problem-solve about ways to address the region's economic problems. The following

for primary care services, frequently voiced their support for such a mobile clinic. Led by GCDC, a collaboration among the Palm Beach County Health Care District, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, the Palm Beach County Public Health Unit, and Planned Approach to Community Health (PATCH) ultimately created the Med-Mobile Program. The GCDC Board of Directors acted on the recommendations of its Health Committee, formulating an agreement for the funding and implementation of the public-private partnership: GCDC provided a grant of \$127,000 to buy a mobile medical clinic for which the Palm Beach County Public Health Unit contributed \$34,000; the Health Department agreed to provide trained staff and operate the Med-Mobile; and the Health Care District committed resources to support the ongoing costs of operating the unit.

The coalition inaugurated the Med-Mobile Program on February 1, 1995. In the fiscal year ending in October of 1997, the Doctor Bus visited 197 community sites, up 22 percent over the previous year. It served 1,844 clients, up 89 percent over the previous year; 456 of the clients were adults, and 1,388 were children. While these numbers indicate real achievement for the Med-Mobile Program, it has taken several years to reach this level of activity. Various title, liability, and administrative issues retarded the development process. Establishing criteria that excluded no one from using the unit's services and staffing the unit through a public sector agency with specific criteria for service created additional challenges. Moreover, Med-Mobile staff have had to cope with school restrictions about immunizations and physicals; with changing insurance and managed care policies; with the development of a sliding fee scale for those able to afford services; and with the possibility of restructuring as a Certified Independent Rural Health Clinic so that it could access additional funding sources. Another recent challenge facing the Med-Mobile is the growing need for services created by the closing of the Everglades Regional Hospital in Pahokee.

These serious operating and financing concerns necessitated the creation of a Board that could take responsibility for monitoring the quality of the Med-Mobile Program. The Med-Mobile Consortium Board first convened in October of 1996. Along with Health Care District and other government officials, it included a GCDC Board and staff member and representatives from PATCH and from the community-at-large. The Consortium Board meets quarterly, and it has developed a strategic plan that includes ways of ensuring community input. Another goal addresses the needs of the increasing number of residents and migrant workers ineligible for medical coverage, caused by changing health and welfare policies at the federal, state, and county levels. The Board has been useful in providing direction to the project and in generating community recognition and support.

The Med-Mobile Program is maturing. It has become more efficient and cost-effective in its operations; it serves more clients in more places and at more varied times; it is creating an important role for itself in the Glades. GCDC's intermediary role gives it a special place on the Consortium Board. In addition, GCDC pays particular attention to ensuring that the community positions on the Consortium Board are filled, thus establishing an institutionalized voice for the community in the governance of Med-Mobile operations. In concert with the other members of that Board, GCDC continues to labor to ensure that the unit remains fully staffed, financially supported, properly equipped, aggressively marketed, flexible in the face of changing health care delivery policies, and truly responsive to the community's needs.



Nurse Practitioner with adolescent patient on the Med-Mobile

year, when the Empowerment Zone applications were announced, the three cities prepared a joint application, an event few think would have occurred without their working together on the Economic Summit. Because the Glades communities have been isolated from and have competed with each other for so long, the Economic Summit was an important step in building a sense of common interest and a regional perspective.

- **Youth Speak Out.** Three hundred youth from the three cities participated in meetings between youth representatives and the three city councils. In addition, selected to play various roles—as mayors, city commissioners, and city department heads through mock elections at the high schools—youth spent time learning from the adults in these roles how the adults actually carried out their jobs.
- **Families Forums.** A diverse group of over 400 families and youth discussed their concerns in areas such as family support, public safety, health, and adolescence; prioritized the issues that this discussion generated; and presented them to a panel of public and nonprofit officials. Working through the organization Glades PATCH, as well

as local ministers, and other community groups, GCDC staff helped to get the word out about the Forums and recruit residents for various roles such as facilitators for focus groups, volunteer interpreters, musicians to provide live entertainment, and volunteers to prepare a free lunch and provide free child care and transportation. Also present were various city, county, state, and federal representatives and other community resources, such as representatives of the blood bank and booths for voter registration.

## HIPPY

### Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters

You are a young parent with two children living in the Glades. Your older child, the four-year-old, has a quick mind and shows lots of curiosity. Conversations with other parents convince you that your child would benefit from Head Start, so you go to enroll him. But there is no room, and they put you on their waiting list. They do, however, offer you an alternative: the HIPPY program, a way to work with your son to nurture his curiosity as he begins school-like activities. But you are nervous. You cannot imagine yourself as your child's teacher . . .

Your daughter begins elementary school today. You are even more excited about this important step in her life than she, for you have helped to prepare her for this moment by participating in the HIPPY program for the last three years. You found new ways to be a good mother to your daughter, and you saw her develop and hone her skills through the HIPPY program. On this first day of school she joins three other children you consider yours: after your first year of HIPPY, you were so enthusiastic about the program that you trained to become a paraprofessional, to work with a new generation of parent educators and their young children. Your concern for your daughter's development has led to employment for you, and your experience in HIPPY has helped to prepare you to be actively involved with her new school.

Some fifteen thousand low-income families across the country enjoy the benefits of HIPPY, an educational program for parents and their three-, four-, and five-year-olds. HIPPY aims to encourage literacy and to stimulate the cognitive development of the child, preparing him or her for an effective beginning in school. HIPPY empowers parents to develop their parenting skills and to be their children's teachers, and through these experiences, it fosters parental involvement in the life of schools and communities. The HIPPY program in the Glades is housed in and administered by the local Head Start Program. This coupling strengthens the program, as parents learn about the health, nutrition, mental health, dental hygiene, and social services available through Head Start.

For each week over the three preschool years covered by the program, HIPPY provides some 90 packets of daily activities. Four paraprofessionals from the local community use these packets in their work with parents. Every month parents get together with HIPPY staff to learn how to use the materials with their children. The HIPPY brochure declares



HIPPY paraprofessional coaches mother as she works and plays with her son

- **Rural Initiatives Conference.** Residents were presented with information and a process through which they established priorities in four areas: agriculture, enterprise development, tourism, and workforce preparation.
- **Local City Charrettes.** Diverse groups of citizens and other stakeholders participated in visioning and strategic planning sessions that began in 1994 and continued over the next several years.

## Grantmaking

From its inception, the vision of GCDC as an intermediary included the availability of flexible resources that could be deployed to promote program development. GCDC undertook two kinds of grantmaking initiatives: small program grants and larger institutional investments. The goal of the first, the Discretionary Rapid Response Grants Program, was to provide grants of up to \$3,500 to groups to meet some immediate needs and to stimulate program development. Grants were targeted for small community groups, especially those without 501(c)3 status, doing innovative work in the area of youth. The Board felt that youth organizations in the Glades had many pressing needs that could begin to be addressed with modest funds. In one case, GCDC provided support for two employees of the Pahokee Parks and Recreation Department, who, in response to violence at Pahokee social events, convened a teen town meeting to solicit comments from youth on the kinds of programs they desire. Subsequently, a youth club was formed to provide constructive activities for teens in Pahokee. In another case, GCDC provided support for an informal afterschool recreational program. Assisted by nine volunteer coaches, the organizers of these activities expanded their reach to 175 young men who met nightly to play organized basketball.

Other examples of funded projects include: a youth community revitalization project, Blacks on the Serious Side; a parenting program sponsored by the Haitian Catholic Center; and

that HIPPY “is about spending fifteen minutes a day at the kitchen table with a story-book, a puzzle, or a learning game, and it’s about children who enter kindergarten ready to succeed . . . Learning and play mingle throughout HIPPY’s structured curriculum as parents encourage their children to recognize shapes and colors, tell stories, follow directions, solve logical problems, and acquire other school readiness skills.” HIPPY also provides job skill development and work experience for the people in the community who become paraprofessionals.

GCDC learned about the need for a program like HIPPY from many families in the community. In addition, teachers reported that some children in the Glades arrived at elementary school with so little preparation that they were unable to succeed and had to repeat their first year, thus beginning what often became a school career marked by unrealized potential or failure. To address this need, GCDC first contacted the National Council of Jewish Women, which sponsors HIPPY programs in other areas and wanted to start a program at the migrant camp in South Bay. But GCDC was committed to providing these services broadly in the community. So while the National Council proceeded with development of a South Bay program, GCDC formed a partnership with two organizations: Palm Beach County Head Start, which agreed to sponsor a broader HIPPY program for the Glades, and the Private Industry Council, which approved employment and training funds to enable HIPPY to hire and train four workers with low-income backgrounds. GCDC expected to be able to establish a HIPPY program in the Glades by the opening of school in the fall of 1994, but internal organizational challenges faced by both its public sector partners retarded the schedule. HIPPY finally opened in Belle Glade and Pahokee in 1995, when it began to serve forty families.

GCDC worked hard to bring this new service to the Glades and then to establish it as an independent organization with outside funding. When the program needed bridge funds, GCDC developed a package with grants from the Community Foundation, the Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation (a small foundation in Palm Beach County), and its own funds. With GCDC encouragement, Palm Beach County Head Start applied for and received a grant from the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners and a matching grant from the Children’s Services Council. This represented three years of support.

A GCDC staff member continues GCDC’s involvement in HIPPY by serving on the Advisory Board. This helps to ensure that the program both remains responsive to local needs and continues to be connected to resources outside the Glades. The Advisory Board is deeply committed to hiring and training local staff. This contrasts with many programs that are run by a central office on the Coast and that tend to hire staff who commute to the Glades on a daily basis. GCDC staff also make sure that the HIPPY program participates in the National Council of Jewish Women’s support system for HIPPY programs. GCDC staff sit on the HIPPY USA Regional Board, which meets quarterly in Tampa.

GCDC played a critical role in bringing HIPPY to the Glades by helping Glades residents articulate a need and then bring it to fruition and by brokering resources from a variety of public and private sources. HIPPY not only provides an important service to parents and children, but it also opens new avenues for adult training and employment.

## Youth and Family Development Agenda

A high-school-aged daughter of migrant workers has many dreams for herself. She has expressed interest in government and public service. But she needs an opportunity to gain more skills than school alone can provide . . .

A local community youth group is floundering. The volunteer coordinator has been sick for several weeks and most of the kids have stopped coming by. The group needs funds for athletic equipment but does not know where to go for such help . . .

Limited opportunities in the Glades drive many of the region's most talented young people away as they seek training, employment, recreation, choices. The Glades cannot afford this brain drain. Like other communities, it desires to do well by its younger members. Youth represent the community's future. The Youth and Family Development Agenda (YFDA) reflects GCDC's commitment to look far into that future as it seeks to build leadership capacity well beyond the present.

The YFDA includes three major components that parallel GCDC's larger program initiatives directed toward Health and Human Development, Economic Development, and Capacity Building. These YFDA components are Youth Program Development, the Youth Entrepreneurial Project (part of the EDGE Center), and the Youth Leadership Initiative.

Surveys of youth agencies revealed to GCDC a significant gap between need and supply in recreation, social development, tutorial assistance, and quality afterschool programs. The GCDC Board issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) in December 1995 to community youth organizations, asking them to describe how their operations could be enhanced to respond to the gaps that had been identified by the survey. Staff of the Community Foundation and the Children's Services Council helped the YFDA Committee of the GCDC Board to design the RFP and to develop procedures for proposal review and ranking. GCDC staff and board members made site visits, conducted applicant interviews, and ultimately selected three grantees to receive \$15,000 each year for two years. All three youth groups work to broaden the horizons of participating youth and to teach them to value themselves as contributing members of the community.

- Neighborhood Buddies teaches youth to create business opportunities in the areas of music, art, and journalism. GCDC had provided the grassroots group with a small grant several years before YFDA that had helped it to obtain its 501(c)3 designation and to secure \$10,000 from the Community Foundation for its afterschool program. Following the YFDA award, Neighborhood Buddies received funding from the Children's Services Council.
- Concerned Youth for Community Improvement (CYCI) teaches youth about democracy and the legislative process at the local level. CYCI used GCDC's technical assistance services, which helped them to obtain public sector funding.

an afterschool program for migrant workers' children sponsored by Latinos en Acción. A Board committee reviewed the requests and recommended some fifteen of these grants in GCDC's early years. GCDC staff worked with the groups to



YFDA teens in T-shirt studio

help them develop their programs and identify additional resources that would enable them to move forward.

This small grants program identified and supported some promising groups and grassroots leaders, provided important visibility for GCDC within the community, and helped GCDC staff learn about the needs and opportunities for youth development in the Glades.

During this initial period, GCDC also made three larger institutional grants. These represented more significant investments not only financially but also organizationally because GCDC staff played a proactive role in developing them. These grants were for a medical clinic on wheels, a parenting education program, and a Grief and Loss program. The last program takes a train-the-trainer approach to helping children and families deal with the loss of loved ones, stimulated in part by the high incidence of AIDS in the Glades.

Despite the gratifying successes from this grantmaking, GCDC's becoming a grantmaker raised serious questions about the organization's focus and role in the community. Grantmaking required a great deal of staff and Board time that was thus not available for the activity central to GCDC's mission—capacity building. Staff came to see that GCDC's work was just beginning once a grant was made. Sometimes the grantee organization needed help to maintain program quality, at other times to institutionalize the project. Perhaps more significant

was GCDC's discomfort with the power that accrues from the control of money and fear that the organization might be perceived by the community primarily as a funder, potentially creating a we-they dynamic that could undermine GCDC's role as a partner and a catalyst. Finally, GCDC wanted to avoid the perception that it was competing with other nonprofits in the Glades for external resources, even if GCDC intended to distribute these resources to the community. As a result, GCDC's Board decided to suspend its grant program indefinitely and limit its grantmaking primarily to brokering funds from outside the community that would be unlikely to come to the Glades without GCDC's participation.

### **EVOLUTION OF GCDC'S PROGRAM AGENDA, 1995–1998**

Mounting a comprehensive community change initiative poses the challenge of choice for the intermediary. In this case, GCDC must continually address two questions: How can the organization use its limited resources most strategically to advance development in the Glades? And, given the particular role and function of the intermediary, how can GCDC do so in ways that catalyze and support development activities led by others? With so many potential ways to serve the community in so many different sectors, the intermediary must constantly strive for balance between disciplined focus and opportunistic entrepreneurship in answering these questions.

Being strategic also means creatively confronting the inherent tension between process and product.<sup>6</sup> Projects that are pressured to produce tangible outcomes before they establish an inclusive and participatory community dynamic may yield some new housing or fill some gaps in social services. But they are unlikely to generate the community ownership that becomes the driving force for lasting change. Similarly, projects that establish rich social networks and a long-term vision may invest so much time and energy in the process

- St. Philip Benize Church serves predominantly Haitian and Hispanic children, two populations identified as underserved in the 1995 survey. The program provides stipends and training for older teens who work with younger children.

The process of making these grants was very positive from GCDC's perspective: the community perceived the process as fair; the Board members learned about grantmaking; and three excellent community-based organizations serving different youth populations found support. However, although the grants served to fill some of the program gaps delineated in the 1995 survey, the majority of youth programs continued to lack the funding, information, and organizational capacity to function as effectively as they might, and there was still no coordinated network of youth services in the Glades. GCDC's YFDA Committee proposed to address these problems through the creation of a Youth Council that would act as a clearinghouse and information network for youth programs working in the Glades. Through the Council, youth organizations could share resources, develop collaborative projects, gain access to technical assistance, and have a voice for youth concerns that none of the organizations would have alone.

Establishing such a Council was a challenging task, however. As an intermediary, GCDC did not want to run the Council. Instead, staff invited community youth organizations in the Glades to meet to discuss the development of the Council. Seventeen groups attended the meeting. It took time to build trust among the organizations and to identify leadership. After two years of laying the groundwork, the Glades Youth Council was formally inaugurated in 1998. An 18-person Advisory Board was formed, with each member representing a different youth program, project, or interest in the community. A GCDC staff person serves as an ex-officio officer.

One of the Council's first projects is a collaborative effort with local sororities, fraternities, area businesses, schools, the Cooperative Extension, local municipalities, the Glades Positive Alternative Partnership (a well-regarded youth organization), and GCDC's YFDA Committee. Funded by the Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation, the Youth Leadership Initiative engages 35 to 50 emerging youth leaders over a year-long period in exploring and developing career options, team building skills, decision-making processes, and community and civic responsibility. The project aims to equip the next generation of leaders with the tools and resources they need to contribute to sustainable community change.

The Youth Council grows stronger, with more members joining each month. Discussions are underway to have the Glades Positive Alternative Partnership serve as the umbrella organization for the Glades Youth Council. In this way, the Council would have direct access to funding opportunities and to an established Board focused on concerns of the Council. GCDC supports this investigation.



Adolescents perform in Potluck in the Muck

of community building that they are unable to formulate and meet more concrete near- and mid-term goals toward fulfilling their vision. If the benefits from an initiative are for too long largely intangible, it may be difficult to sustain participation and community support. Both extremes—a disproportionate focus on either product or process—can lead to demoralization and reinforce fears that progress is impossible.

Community building does not progress linearly and may be best fueled by stimulating work on a number of fronts simultaneously. However, as GCDC's program agenda evolved, there was a growing sense among Board, staff, and funders that the program was insufficiently focused, and that it was unlikely to be able to demonstrate impact because organizational resources were spread too thin. Without specific definitions of goals and outcomes, GCDC had few indicators against which to assess its progress or for which the community and the funders could hold it accountable. Responding to pressure from both internal and external forces, the GCDC staff and Board spent a year starting in mid-1993 developing a coherent and focused agenda for the organization. With help from several consultants, GCDC held two retreats and completed a variety of strategic planning tasks. The

## The EDGE Center, the Business Loan Fund, and the Youth Entrepreneurial Project

**The EDGE Center.** Walk into the largest room of the GCDC offices and you see a white picket fence around a colorful vision of a thriving Glades main street. There are storefronts that house developing businesses that may one day fulfill that vision. This is the physical embodiment of the EDGE Center's mission. GCDC quickly recognized the central role of jobs and economic opportunity in a comprehensive approach to community revitalization. One of its very important spinoffs is the Enterprise Development for Glades Entrepreneurs Center, Inc., or the EDGE Center, an organization that helps launch, recruit, and retain small enterprises and that provides technical assistance and access to loans.

The EDGE Center opened in 1997 to help prospective entrepreneurs design business plans, secure loans, and launch their enterprises. It was funded initially by an \$80,000 grant from the County's Economic Development Program and a \$60,000 Federal grant from the Rural Development Administration. The EDGE Center has strong leadership. Its 18-member Board draws on the experience of a diverse group of individuals who represent all three cities, public and private interests, business and education, community residents, and potential incubator tenants. The Center's director, Carl Seibert, lives in the Glades and was previously an employee of South Bay Growers. When that enterprise closed, he and his wife opened their own business in Belle Glade, and they immediately faced significant challenges. He learned first-hand about the importance of the kind of support the EDGE Center provides. "Where was this when I needed it?" And so Carl has helped the Center become the advocate for small business in the Glades.

Twenty-six people participated in the first round of training sessions. The enterprises they are working to develop cover a broad range, including a day care center, a computer repair service, and an ecotourism business. The EDGE Center chose to begin with prospective entrepreneurs with at least a high school education. New approaches will be developed to assist those with less education.

**The Business Loan Fund.** Many Glades businesses have encountered serious difficulty obtaining loans from traditional lending sources, leading to significant pent-up demand for capital in the Glades. GCDC has worked closely with the County to promote the formation of the Business Loan Fund of the Palm Beaches. The Fund is a newly-established independent nonprofit with a Board of Directors and community advisory councils in each of the seven Development Regions of the County, including the Glades. Still in the process of being fully capitalized, the Fund has assets of \$325,000 in lines of credit from private banks, a loan from the Florida Community Development Loan Fund, and grants from several regional banks totalling \$60,000. The County provides \$200,000 annually for administrative funding. Individuals who receive loans must agree to enroll in an entrepreneurial training program for the life of the loan. The EDGE Center serves as the feeder system in the Glades to review and approve the business plans prior to their submission to the Loan Committee.

**The Youth Entrepreneurial Project.** This project is a collaboration among the EDGE Center, GCDC's Youth and Family Development Agenda, the County's Cooperative Extension, and the Glades Guild. The youth will be involved in such diverse



Carl Seibert, EDGE Center Director

product of this work was a program agenda with three key areas: Health and Human Services, Economic Development, and Capacity Building.

**Health and Human Services.** Early in its history, GCDC identified some significant gaps in services for residents of the Glades and took action to address these gaps through such programs as the Med-Mobile, HIPPY, and the Grief and Loss program. Similarly, on the basis of research on services for youth in the Glades, GCDC developed a Youth and Family Development Agenda (YFDA) to strengthen the system of supports for youth and to enhance youth leadership. Another component of GCDC's human development agenda is vocational empowerment and workforce preparation. Individuals living outside the community fill many of the public sector administrative and management positions in the Glades. GCDC aims to determine the skill levels and credentials needed to fill these positions and to work with local schools, the community college and technical training school, and the county's workforce development office to develop training strategies that will enable Glades residents to access higher skilled jobs in the existing job market.

enterprises as aquaculture, hydroponics, child care, lawn maintenance, graphics, and crafts. They have access to the Business Loan Fund, training from the Cooperative Extension, and support for the development of their business plans from the EDGE Center. With a \$5,000 grant from the Joseph and Florence Roblee Foundation, GCDC has purchased 100 sets of a curriculum developed through the Kauffman Foundation for Youth Entrepreneurship. The Project is structured around frequent peer group meetings for training and support. New loans for any of the group members can be awarded only as all the group members' outstanding loans are repaid. The Project intends to teach young people about business and about civic and community responsibility and, possibly, to stimulate parents who have been out of the economic mainstream to examine opportunities and options for themselves as their children meet with success.

GCDC has played a key role in supporting the development of all three enterprises. For both the EDGE Center and the Business Loan Fund, it helped to recruit board members, it arranged meetings and distributed materials, and it connected them to GCDC's ongoing programs. GCDC has acted as fiscal agent for the Center<sup>7</sup> and has rented it space; GCDC staff sit on the Boards of both organizations. And because GCDC is deeply embedded in the community, staff can work informally to connect different sectors and networks, aiming to stimulate synergy among different development strategies. Virginia Martin, GCDC's Assistant Director, tells the story of an individual who came to her for help in starting a business as a local tour guide. Working with Barnett Bank and the Future Farmworkers of America Project at Pahokee High School, Virginia helped the Future Farmworkers Advisory Council hire this local guide, rent a school bus, and provide lunch for 23 at-risk students in the Agricultural program..

*We started at 7:30 a.m. . . . On the way to their first stop, the students learned about the potential for environmental tourism, small business opportunities in the tourism industry, facts about the agricultural base of the region, and some interesting historical tidbits. At US Sugar, the students talked with an attorney, an accountant, a nurse, and a business manager. We then took them to South Florida Water Management District to talk with an environmental scientist and a biologist. After picking up lunch at the Clewiston Inn, courtesy of U.S. Sugar, they headed back toward Belle Glade. More local information was shared by the guide, and some career "visioning" was encouraged. Among the chaperones were an hydrologist and a farmer . . . At the IFAS research station, the students spoke with a computer scientist (one of GCDC's Vision to Action participants) and a horticulturist. The last leg of the journey was to the John Deere dealership, where the students talked with a mechanic, a salesman, and a secretary.*

*When the students returned from their adventure, they were buzzing with excitement about what they had seen and heard. Within the next few days, a number of them went to the local Chamber of Commerce breakfast to relay what they had learned on their excursion. Comments from the chamber included, "they were so excited!" Comments from the teacher included, "Kids that have never so much as said 'boo' in my class were up in front of a crowd of strangers talking about wanting to have a career in agriculture."*

*This was also a learning experience for the teachers on the trip. Everywhere they went, they hear the words "computer" and "communication." Neither public speaking nor computer labs were part of the Ag curriculum. They are now! Kids in the Ag department are now in computer lab two days a week and they are incorporating a public speaking course into next year's curriculum.*

Change can affect different layers of the community in many ways: a new businessperson—the local tour guide—gets a start, young students see for the first time a future for themselves in the local economy, and a school's attitude and curriculum begin to change.

## Tourism

One person looking for opportunities for employment lives in a remote part of a large and wealthy county which boasts some amazing features: world-class bass fishing, ways to view nature up close and personal, and a concentration of agricultural interests. Another person has come to Palm Beach for ten days to relax, to enjoy the beach, to play golf, to shop, to savor fine food. Sated with these pleasures, she looks for other recreational adventures in the area.

These two lives could intersect in the Glades. The region offers tourists opportunities for boat rentals, fishing, swimming, boat cruises and air boat tours of Lake Okeechobee; agricultural tours of sugar cane fields and a sugar mill, of citrus fields and packing centers, of a rice processing facility, and a unique tree farm; bicycling the Lake Okeechobee Trail on top of the dike around the lake; and more golf. The challenge: to ensure that these two lives do intersect by one finding work in a growing tourist industry and the other learning of the recreational options in the Glades.

GCDC plays a major role in meeting that challenge. In the early 1990s GCDC and key elements in the community identified a growing tourist industry as an important and productive avenue for economic development in the area. Happily, several pivotal events occurred at about the same time: a recognition of the potential of tourism; the construction of the Lake Okeechobee Trail; unprecedented cooperation among the three cities and their chambers of commerce; the MacArthur Foundation's Sustainable Everglades Initiative; the Tourism Development Council's long-term planning to develop hotels and other tourism infrastructure including cultural facilities and events; discussions of a rural relending intermediary program capitalized collaboratively by government and the private sector; possible work with the State's Main Street Program for downtown redevelopment; the surprise that the bed taxes (\$152,000) collected for the region were much higher than anticipated, creating some pressure on County officials to take the Glades more seriously; and cooperative efforts to seek Florida Scenic Highway and Federal Scenic Byway designation.

The Director of the County's Tourism Development Council acknowledged that it had neglected the Glades in the past. The Council was receptive to funding a regional tourism strategy, but South Bay, Belle Glade, and Pahokee had not been able to work together to develop a coordinated proposal. Consequently, the Council welcomed the opportunity to work with GCDC as a vehicle through which to channel resources for such an approach. GCDC was politically acceptable to all parties. And GCDC indeed was able to orchestrate cooperation among the three cities.

**Economic Development.** GCDC's economic development agenda emerged from two activities. The first was a community assets survey that the outside firm of Benson, Kramer, McAllister, and Associates carried out in collaboration with GCDC and a group of residents who received training on how to administer the survey. The results became the basis for a staff and consultant analysis of the economic forces at work in the Glades. The second was a series of forums through which different segments of the community had opportunities to learn about these forces and to work together to fashion a set of development strategies for the Glades. These forums—the Economic Summit, the

Rural Initiatives Conference, and the Local City Charrettes—all generated concerns and priorities that have guided GCDC's approach. GCDC has followed through on helping the community implement the goals it has set for itself by stimulating new partnerships, by accessing resources from outside the Glades, and by supporting vehicles for engaging citizens

in the process of moving the development agenda forward.

The community's interest in small business development emerged early in this process. In 1995, the Board of County Commissioners funded a study conducted as a collaboration among GCDC, the Private Industry Council, and the Pahokee and Belle Glade Chambers of Commerce to determine the need and support for a business incubator program in the Glades. They devised three surveys to assess the feasibility of developing an effective incubator, to educate the community about the possible role of an incubator, and to solicit community input. These surveys targeted the business community, potential entrepreneurs, and the community at large. GCDC staff joined community volunteers to reach out to the different groups, resulting in the completion of 862 surveys. Residents spoke forcefully for such a venture. Ultimately, the process identified 165 people who expressed an interest in starting their own businesses.

With \$20,000 in support from the County, GCDC helped to establish a local steering committee to develop a business plan for the incubator. The vision became reality in 1997 with the establishment of the Enterprise Develop-



Marina on Lake Okeechobee, Belle Glade



Katherine Scheffler and Norma Moore of the Glades Guild at the EDGE Center

ment for Glades Entrepreneurs Center, otherwise known as the EDGE Center. A related set of projects has grown up around the EDGE Center, including the Business Loan Fund and the Youth Entrepreneurship Project (which are also described in the Profile).

The results of the 1995 survey also identified a sufficient number of residents with craft skills to warrant initiating a cooperative marketing venture. GCDC submitted a successful \$25,000 application to the County's Development Regions Fund to secure seed money for a craft guild to support the development of microenterprise in the Glades. The Glades Guild opened its doors in March of 1997 for a two-week show and sale of quilts, specialty clothes, and other handicrafts. Thirty-two people displayed their crafts; two of these original participants have since opened a store in downtown Belle Glade, drawing on the exposure and income gained from the show. Seventy-nine people now participate in the Guild. Colocated with GCDC, the Guild is working with the EDGE Center, which can provide Guild members with business training and access to funding through the Business Loan Fund. With support from GCDC, the Guild is now going through the process of incorporation and fundraising.

The final major initiative to date in the economic development arena concerns tourism. In an effort to attract people and resources to the Glades, and to stimulate cooperation among the three cities of the Glades, GCDC helped create the Western Communities Tourism Alliance (WCTA). By providing some start-up funds and a permanent space to house WCTA staff, GCDC was able to leverage from the three cities ongoing funding and a commitment to work together to develop effective tourism

In 1995, GCDC helped to create the Western Communities Tourism Alliance (WCTA), whose mission was to improve the opportunities for tourism development in the Glades and the Western Communities (located east of the Glades but west of the Florida Turnpike). Its members include GCDC, the local cities and Chambers of Commerce, and Palm Beach County's Tourist Development Council. GCDC's Executive Director initially chaired WCTA. With a \$65,000 funding package (\$20,000 from the Tourism Development Council; \$10,000 from the County; \$15,000 from the cities and Chambers matched by another \$15,000 from the Convention and Visitors Bureau; and \$5,000 from GCDC), WCTA hired Deborah Thatcher, a tourism marketing specialist, as director. This position is securely funded through 1999. Ms. Thatcher's mission: develop a plan to promote tourism in the region. Ms. Thatcher operates half-time at GCDC and half-time at the chamber of commerce that serves the Western Communities, which was recently established in order to give more attention to the western part of the county. She is exploring a number of approaches ranging from modest physical improvement and clean-up strategies to outreach to new markets for various forms of outdoor recreation, including fishing, equestrian activities, camping, and boating. Ms. Thatcher works closely with GCDC staff and uses input from the Local Charrettes and the Vision to Action process. GCDC provides an office and office support for the WCTA and also serves as its fiscal agent and funding conduit.

GCDC has made significant strides in its effort to place tourism high on the economic development agenda in the Glades: through the Charrettes and Vision to Action, it helped the community articulate its interest in tourism; through its role as a politically neutral intermediary, it encouraged the cooperation of the three cities; and through its contacts, it helped gather the resources for substantial support for the Western Communities Tourism Alliance.



WCTA Director, Deborah Thatcher

The development of tourism as a major economic force in the Glades faces other challenges, most especially the lack of a hospitality industry infrastructure. In response, GCDC has fostered discussions about developing a bed and breakfast capacity. In addition, it has encouraged emerging ecotourism strategies like bird watching and nature tours; it has joined in the call for the creation of nature, agricultural, heritage, cultural, and craft trails; and it has helped entrepreneurs start tours of the region. This strategy sets the stage for the future design of a comprehensive, interlinked plan to promote the Glades' unique environment, its revitalized downtowns, its emerging attractions, its agricultural heritage, and its cottage industries. Thanks in no small measure to the efforts of GCDC, the people and municipalities of the Glades are actively and effectively pursuing tourism as a significant part of the economic development agenda.

strategies for the region.

**Capacity Building.** The original conception of GCDC stressed the need for an intermediary with a strong commitment to local empowerment. Central to this commitment was GCDC's goal of engaging a critical mass of local citizens with the requisite knowledge, skills, and will to collaborate in the creation of a coherent, long-term regional development strategy. This involved stimulating new relationships among people from diverse backgrounds, building new relationships among residents and community institutions, and fostering a new civic culture that could promote and support these new relationships.

The public forums described earlier continue to play an important role on GCDC's capacity building agenda. In 1996, Miami-Dade Community College conducted a citizen planner series in the Glades. The MacArthur Foundation funded this effort through the Conservation Fund, an intermediary working on issues of sustainable development. GCDC collaborated with Miami-Dade to enable about 45 residents to take this training, which was designed to provide them with planning and community development information and skills. Also in 1996, the Vision to Action Forum was launched. This initiative was designed to develop leadership and community involvement capable of transforming visions into sustainable realities. *Potluck in the Muck*, a theatrical and civic event produced in and by the community, represents another, if quite different, approach to reinforcing a shared sense of history and common identity that can become the basis for collective problem solving and action. A third important initiative on GCDC's capacity building agenda was its participation in the Empowerment Evaluation Workshop process. This program, sponsored by GCDC in collaboration with the National Civic League located in Denver, is designed to help residents and organizations understand accountability and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs and institutions operating in the community. A GCDC Board-staff team as well as twenty other individuals from the community participated. All three of these processes—Vision to Action, *Potluck in the Muck*, and Empowerment Evaluation—have been important vehicles for GCDC's efforts to create opportunities for leadership development, for

## Vision to Action

Your priorities are clear when you listen to Community and when you respect Community. And that may change your previously established plans and schedules. You give people information so they can make decisions for themselves. That's what we're all about—putting the information and opportunities out there and empowering people to educate themselves and make their own decisions.

*Autrie Moore-Williams, Executive Director*

Leadership in community development can take different forms. Leadership can be expressed by powerful people who arrive in a place full of ideas and energy. This kind of leadership depends on the leader's power to mobilize followers who resonate to his or her vision. A wholly different form of leadership carefully elicits and responds to people's goals and needs. It reflects the community back to itself, and it develops leadership in the community. It requires flexibility, patience, a willingness to learn, and the ability to listen. The first kind of leadership courts the danger of never taking root in the community. The second lends itself to long-term community development, for it is the vehicle through which the community discovers how to lead itself.

GCDC has been consistently committed to community: to listening to the community, to empowering the community, to enabling the community to sound its own feelings and ideas, to informing the community, to ensuring that all segments of the community have a say. This was a founding principle. It has been continually restated and reinforced by the GCDC Board. It finds one of its most articulate and passionate spokespersons in its current Executive Director, Autrie Moore-Williams. GCDC has squarely faced the challenge of turning its commitment into action. Vision to Action Forums and Acting on the Vision bring the commitment to community to life.

MDC is a nonprofit research firm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. It has created and implemented a particular process of leadership development.<sup>8</sup> The Mott and MacArthur Foundations introduced MDC to GCDC and provided the financial support to bring the development school called “Movement from Vision to Action Forums” (VAF) to the Glades, using GCDC as its local partner. In doing so, MDC hoped to achieve the following results:

- A cadre of citizen leaders representing diverse sectors and interests with a more unified vision for the economic future of the Glades
- A shared plan of action, incorporating high-impact, strategic priorities that will help the Glades jump-start its cycle of development
- Deep knowledge among participants of state-of-the-art practices in rural development and of their strategic application to the Glades
- Highly developed skills among participants in community collaboration and change
- Indigenous institutional capacity to support and sustain the planning and implementation process

The VAF process devoted winter and spring of 1996 to preparation: MDC staff grew familiar with the people and the political economy of the Glades; they helped prepare GCDC staff for proceeding with VAF; and thirty-four participants were selected—among them, two GCDC staff and four GCDC board members. Four, three-day sequestered retreats were held from May to October 1996; a fifth, two-day session took place in January 1997. What ultimately became thirty-two participants worked in smaller action teams between sessions to collect and analyze enormous amounts of data to inform the strategic planning process. They identified goals and strategies in four important areas: jobs, education and training; civic and social infrastructure; physical infrastructure; and heritage preservation.

VAF participants expressed enthusiasm for the process and pride in the outcomes. MDC’s strong leadership and GCDC’s supporting local role created a forceful and effective coalition. Observers agree that VAF provided a vehicle for building meaningful relations across racial, economic, and social divisions within the Glades in what was clearly a transformational experience for many. Participants learned new skills, gained new knowledge, built new relationships, and generated a product in which they had significant ownership. Participants noted concrete and powerful ways in which the process had affected them personally—from “getting away from yesterday” in terms of changes in attitude about other racial and ethnic groups, to relocating to the community after having worked there for many years, to running for city council office.

To ensure that the process connected with the larger community, those who have been through the process developed a presentation that solicits input and support for the development agenda from the broader community. They held town meetings. They met with church and tenant groups. They also spoke on radio talk shows and wrote articles. Recognizing that the production of some visible signs of accomplishment builds interest and hope in the community, they proposed some short-term strategies that would produce early results, as well as other strategies that might take decades or more. Most of VAF’s recommendations do not require substantial new resources, and many are linked to each other in ways that participants expect will be synergistic.

VAF experienced significant challenges: balancing short-term achievements with long-term goals, maintaining the momentum and commitment of the core group, and expanding the number of people involved in executing and extending the agenda. VAF participants both value the support that GCDC has provided VAF and note the importance of distinguishing VAF as a separate entity. GCDC has encouraged this view. Central to GCDC’s philosophy is the belief that the work on projects must come from participants, and the ownership must reside with them.

VAF began a new stage called Acting on the Vision in February 1998. GCDC and the Conservation Fund, along with MDC, are partners in this three-year project supported by the Kellogg Foundation. The goal is to extend the leadership development accomplished in VAF to one hundred fifty new self-nominated participants. This ambitious effort has started auspiciously with significant involvement from all sectors of the community and a commitment to further refine and implement the VAF agenda.

MDC guided the initial VAF process, and GCDC was the conduit through which VAF came to life in the Glades. Now VAF has become an independent force for change, growing in depth and breadth. Acting on the Vision, the offspring of VAF, will continue to help the community find its voice. With GCDC staff and Board members active in VAF, VAF serves as an important institutional vehicle through which GCDC can hear from the community and can support new leaders and new community initiatives.

## Potluck in the Muck

*"It's so flat here a train track looks like a wrinkle."*

*"It's so flat here you can see into next week. (Weather conditions permitting.)"*

*"I'm from the richest, blackest earth there is."*

*"I am from a place where more than two thousand people drowned in a single night."*

*"I got a story.*

*You got a story.*

*We got a story to tell . . . "*



Vernon Dexter and Tyrone Thatcher

Thus began the community performance over Memorial Day weekend, 1998, called *Potluck in the Muck*. Women and men; girls and boys; African-American, European-American, and Hispanic; affluent and poor; old and young; unemployed and professionals—the people of the Glades act, dance, sing, and trumpet their stories. Some stories bring laughter; some bring tears. They all are genuine. They all are powerful. And they all together celebrate the Glades, the place and its people.

*Potluck in the Muck* took place on a unique stage: inside a large refrigerator room at a vegetable packing house. Giant versions of the labels from the vegetable crates formed the backdrop to piles of crates and pallets that were the stage furniture. Quilts hung around the other three sides of the room. The cast dressed in simple rural costumes. Only a dozen or so lights, artfully deployed, effectively illuminated the scenes. The whole gave a feeling of a small agricultural community, with emphasis on "community." In the darkened and chilly refrigerator room, magic happened. Friends and neighbors became actors, singers, musicians, and dancers as they told the stories of their community. The idea was to honor the Glades and to build community. And so it did. There was a real blossoming of talents in the cast and crew and a flowering of the arts in the Glades. *Potluck*

*in the Muck* brought together people of diverse backgrounds to cooperate on an important project. It validated the experiences and tales that are part of the Glades. And it created a common ground for the diverse audience.

*"The hurricane at Galveston, Texas, killed more people. The Johnstown Flood in Pennsylvania killed more people. And third on that awful list of killer natural disasters in this country is the hurricane of '28 on Lake Okeechobee."*

*"It was the breaking and the making of this place . . . "*

*"So, those who died in the hurricane: we remember you."*

*"And those who lived to tell the story: we remember and we thank you."*

Residents of the Glades accomplished their theatrical and community-building tour de force in five months with technical assistance, encouragement, and financial support from outside sources. The MacArthur Foundation sparked the idea through



The diversity of the community reflected in the performers of *Potluck in the Muck*

a grant to the Center for Creative Education that helped Glades residents network with people doing community performance. MacArthur also provided the bulk of the funding for the production of *Potluck in the Muck*. Jeannette Dexter (the Vice President of GCDC) and Ken Jackson (an educator, minister, musician, and Glades community activist) embraced community performance, and their enthusiasm brought it to life in the Glades. Karen Kimbrel (of *Swamp Gravy* in Colquit, Georgia) and Jules Curry Corriere (of *Pieced Together* in Newport News, Virginia) provided invaluable help by sharing their experiences in staging community performance. Community Performance, Inc. (a collaboration among director Richard Geer of Northwestern University in Chicago, set designer Joe Varga of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and playwright Jo Carson from Tennessee) provided the technical assistance required to create and present *Potluck in the Muck*. Ken Jackson and Cathy Morgan of the Glades composed music and choreographed dances respectively, while Karen Kimbrel helped write songs.

Glades residents learned about community performance; they traveled to Colquit to see the community performance there; they sought and secured funding; they learned how to interview Glades residents for their stories; they found a space; they recruited performers; they found more sponsors; they learned about producing a theater piece; they created music and choreography; they created the costumes; they promoted the show—they did it all. With only a little more than a week for rehearsals and with other obligations competing for their attention and energy, the cast and crew of *Potluck in the Muck* presented a remarkably polished and emotionally powerful piece to their neighbors. The audiences of several hundred at each performance reflected the cast: the diversity of the people of the Glades.

*My parents followed the crops, and I learned early on I wasn't the outdoor type. Here, the muck eats me alive, and if the muck is not enough, every blood sucking bug within ten miles gets a scent of me and comes running. When I started first grade I thought I'd found heaven. There were screens on the windows. I took to school. I begged to be left here when my parents would leave. I begged to be left with anybody, and there were years when I'm the one who found people who would take me in, and I'd do the housework for my board so I could be in school for the whole year. I knew somehow from the minute I stepped through the door of a school the first time that it was my ticket to a different kind of life from the one my parents lived. I don't know where some children come by such knowledge, but they do and I was one of them . . .<sup>9</sup>*

*Potluck in the Muck* could lead to some interesting outcomes. It could foster cultural understanding and build a shared sense of history among the different racial and ethnic groups who live in the Glades. Over the longer run it could become a valuable tourist venue with the potential to generate full- and part-time jobs. It could create a collection of support businesses operated by micro-entrepreneurs. Those involved with *Potluck in the Muck* dream that this multi-faceted project will come to include both the theatrical production and a book containing a compilation of the vignettes and stories of the region. They hope to purchase the packing house and to collocate there an agricultural museum with farm machinery, photos, and other historical artifacts; a general store that will provide a public venue for crafts, produce, and other Glades products; a training and staging area for other community arts productions; an after-school program; and GCDC's offices. They have submitted proposals for the funding of this dream.

*"I got a story.  
You got a story.  
We got a story to tell . . ."*



Autrie Moore-Williams in *Potluck in the Muck*

widespread community input, and for the development of a compelling voice for change.

In building capacity, GCDC has been guided by several important principles:

- GCDC's philosophy is to facilitate a process that organizes and positions different sectors of the community to speak for themselves. The Youth Speak Out, the Families Forum, and Vision to Action reflect this philosophy. Staff assiduously avoid the temptation to represent or speak for the community.
- Staff pay particular attention to developing opportunities for residents with the least voice to be heard by the larger community. Examples include youth speaking at a local Chamber of Commerce meeting, people on welfare testifying at a hearing on welfare reform, and residents affected by HIV/AIDS voicing their concerns about the quality and availability of services in a meeting attended by thirty individuals from various service agencies.
- Staff assume that information is power and spend considerable effort collecting and disseminating data so that people will have the knowledge and tools to provide input. Much of the agenda at the Rural Initiatives Conference was devoted to educating participants about various rural development strategies so that they could make informed choices about which to pursue. Vision to Action participants spent a significant amount of time analyzing community social and economic data in order to develop their action plan. Empowerment Evaluation participants use data to assess the effectiveness of organizations serving the community.

As an intermediary GCDC aims to bring together different voices, ideas, and resources and to collect and analyze data that can inform the development process. To be effective in the intermediary role, GCDC believes it must avoid being pulled into political battles or assuming an active advocacy role that would align the organization with some segments of the community against others. What it can do, and what it is meant to do, is to help give voice to other organizations for which political action is appropriate and advocacy is a primary mission. And it can help to create and promote groups of citizens (like the Vision to Action and Empowerment Evaluation participants, EDGE Center Board members, Youth Council members, and HIPPIY parents) who can press for change and contribute to development in an informed and effective manner. Such groups have been nurtured by GCDC and have found—or are likely to find in the future—their own power and ways to exert it in the Glades.

# GCDC'S Organizational Development

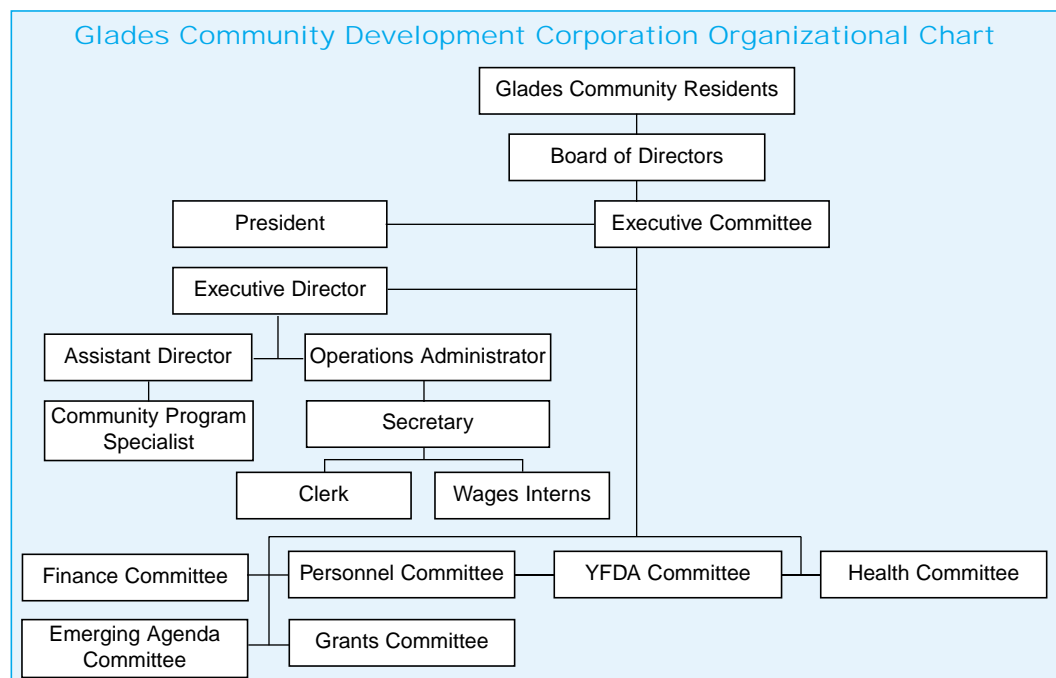
## BOARD

The initial proposal for GCDC envisioned an Advisory Committee composed of community members and outside representatives. This Advisory Committee was to provide overall guidance and technical assistance to the enterprise. A core planning group made up of the Community Foundation and the community members with whom they had been working selected ten people to serve on the Advisory Committee, which met for the first time in October 1991. The core planning group made an explicit attempt to select grassroots leaders rather than organizational representatives to constitute the Committee. These individuals were active community volunteers in different sectors of the community but generally had little or no experience sitting on the board of an organization. This orientation made sense in terms of GCDC's empowerment goal, but many on the current Board now suggest that it was unrealistic to expect a group so constituted to take on the ambitious and challenging task of guiding the development of GCDC at the outset.

As in similar efforts nationally, the Advisory Committee confronted the frustration of lengthy meetings without resolution, conflicts of interest for Board members who wanted to apply for grants from GCDC, absence of trust and a shared vision, and difficulties in focusing their efforts. These problems were exacerbated by the group's inexperience in organizational development and management and in group process. The many members who had never served on a board before needed help learning how best to contribute; others were unsure of the relative distribution of authority between the Community Foundation and the Advisory Committee.

The group experimented with a committee structure which turned out to be untenable and which it dissolved.

Recognizing the frustration that such a process generates, the Committee—renamed the Glades Community Board—decided that it needed some additional members and a new structure. A joint committee made up of two Glades Community Board mem-



bers, two members of the Liaison Committee (a committee set up by and within the Community Foundation to handle relations between the Foundation and GCDC), and the director of the Community Foundation constituted the group that proposed new members to the larger body. The joint committee's recommendations aimed to fill gaps in the board's skills, diversity profile, and access to networks. These recommendations led to the addition of a local farmer, a local lawyer, and a member of local government, all of whom had access to different powerful interests. The second change in Board functioning involved the creation of a five-member executive committee that met every other month, alternating with the full Board. The goal in establishing this structure was to move GCDC's agenda more efficiently while honoring GCDC's commitment to broad community empowerment. The executive committee brings policy decisions to the full 17-member Board for discussion and approval.

The process of developing the Glades Community Board into a strong board for GCDC was complicated by the fact that GCDC was being incubated by the Community Foundation, whose Board had ultimate fiscal and legal responsibility for GCDC. The Community Foundation managed GCDC through the Liaison Committee of its Board, two members of which served as non-voting members of the Glades Community Board. Technically, GCDC's Director reported not to the Glades Community Board but to the Executive Director of the Community Foundation. These arrangements led to an awkward moment in the incubation process in 1993, as GCDC attempted to empower its own Board as part of its move toward greater independence.

While the long-term vision for GCDC supported the eventual creation of an independent nonprofit in the Glades, there had been little discussion about the timing or the form that such a development would take. On the one hand, all acknowledged the commitment and patience that the Community Foundation had brought to and sustained over the life of the initiative. Very simply, without the Community Foundation's support through tough times, GCDC would not exist. This support was especially impressive because GCDC represented not only an opportunity for success through bold action, but also a high-risk potential liability for a funder as small and new as the Community Foundation. On the other hand, the growing strength of GCDC's Board, its desire to make decisions and control resources locally rather than be governed by an entity outside the community, and the need to establish an independent identity in the Glades all contributed to pressures for separation.

Good intentions existed on all sides, but that did not preclude misunderstanding as the parties moved through this sensitive period of organizational restructuring. Sometimes demands were shrill and patience short. Occasionally, individuals reverted to old roles and patterns of interaction that might have been characteristic of the historical relationships between the Glades and the Coast.<sup>10</sup> One vehicle that helped to support this restructuring process was the Transition Management Board, a committee made up of GCDC Board members and representatives of the Community Foundation. Established in 1994, the Transition Management Board helped GCDC create procedures for managing its own finances, for ensuring that sound accounting and monitoring functions were in place, and for addressing other organizational development issues such as personnel policies and procedures.

When GCDC received its nonprofit designation from the IRS in 1995, the Community Foundation transferred to it organizational responsibility and all remaining project funds. The relationship between the two organizations emerged from the transition period intact. Community Foundation staff continued to provide valuable and appreciated informal support, to broker connections for GCDC with donors and other important contacts on the Coast, and to publicize the challenges confronting development in the Glades and the importance of GCDC's work. GCDC Board members increasingly felt comfortable calling their Community Foundation counterparts directly, a sign not only of the continuing strength of the relationship between the two organizations but also of the Community Foundation's

## Board of Directors



### Juanita Malone\*

Founding Board Member, President of the Board of Directors, Chair of the Executive Committee, Chair of the YFDA Committee, member of the Health Committee  
Member of Vision to Action  
Assistant Principal of Belle Glade Elementary School  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade, now a resident of Wellington  
Joined board in 1991



### Jeannette Dexter\*

Vice President of the Board, Chair of the Personnel Committee  
President of the American Red Cross  
Resource Teacher, Belle Glade Elementary  
Artistic Director, *Potluck in the Muck*  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1992



### Gary Goggans\*

Treasurer of the Board, Chair of the Finance Committee  
Vice President, Bank of Belle Glade  
Born and raised in and a resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1992



### Paul Allen\*

Secretary of the Board, Chair of the Grants Committee  
Farm Manager of RC Hatton Farms, Pahokee  
Born and raised in and a resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1994



### Thomas Montgomery\*

Member of the Personnel and Finance Committees  
Attorney, Belle Glade  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade, now a resident of Royal Palm Beach  
Joined board in 1992



### Irene Figueroa

Founding Board Member, member of YFDA, Finance, and Health Committees  
Member of Vision to Action  
Director, East Coast Migrant Head Start Project, Belle Glade  
Long-term resident of South Bay  
Joined board in 1991



**Desmond Harriott**

Founding Board Member, member of the Personnel and Grants Committees  
Minister, Youth for Christ, West Palm Beach and Belle Glade  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade, now a resident of Royal Palm Beach  
Joined board in 1991



**Henrietta Johnson**

Founding Board member, Chair of the Health Committee, member of the Grants Committee  
Member of Vision to Action  
Program Coordinator of HEART Project, Palm Beach County Health Unit, Belle Glade  
Raised in and a long-term resident of Pahokee  
Joined board in 1991



**Annette Allen**

Member of Personnel and YFDA Committees  
Teacher, Rosenwald Elementary School, South Bay  
Raised in and a long-term resident of South Bay  
Joined board in 1994



**Eugenia Jones**

Member of Personnel and YFDA Committees  
West Area Superintendent of the School Board of Palm Beach County, Belle Glade  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1994



**Milranda Smith**

Chair of the Emerging Agenda Committee  
South Bay Commissioner and teacher at the West Area Alternative Center, Belle Glade  
Born and raised in and a resident of South Bay  
Joined board in 1994



**Hattie Bennett**

Member of the Finance Committee  
Vice President and Branch Manager, Barnett Bank, Belle Glade  
Resident of Okeechobee  
Joined board in 1995



### **Abby Matari**

Member of the Grants Committee, Chair of the Organizing of Action Committee  
Member of Vision to Action  
Retail business owner, Belle Glade  
Raised in Belle Glade, now a resident of Wellington  
Joined board in 1995



### **Pete Moore**

Member of the Emerging Agenda and Health Committees  
Member of the Med-Mobile Advisory Board  
Pahokee City Commissioner, fishing guide on Lake Okeechobee  
Semi-retired agricultural businessman  
Long-term resident of Pahokee  
Joined board in 1996



### **Morales St. Hilaire**

Member of the Health Committee  
Outreach Worker for Job Services and Benefits, Department of Labor, Belle Glade  
Minister, Haitian Baptist Church, Belle Glade  
Long-term resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1996



### **Timothy Henderson**

Member of the Health and Task Force Committees  
Program Development Officer for Quantum Foundation, West Palm Beach  
Resident of Lake Worth  
Joined board in 1998



### **Susie McMillan**

Member of the Health and Task Force Committees  
Nurse Practitioner, Glades General Hospital, Belle Glades  
Born and raised in and a resident of Belle Glade  
Joined board in 1998

\* Member of the Executive Committee

commitment to GCDC and the GCDC Board's maturing capacity and confidence.

Current membership in GCDC's Board is diverse in race, ethnicity, gender, community sector, economic status, and geography. Board members are active in different sectors of community life, and most either live now or have spent most of their lives in the Glades.

In order to be an effective intermediary in a diverse community such as the Glades, GCDC's Board has had to be vigilant about the dynamics of race both within the organization and in relations with the various racial/ethnic groups in the community. Board members share a deep commitment to improving the quality of life in the Glades for *all* residents, a commitment that has helped the Board weather the threat of divisive forces that could have undermined its work. This internal strength has enabled the organization to extend its reach into and build its legitimacy among diverse groups within the Glades. The fact that GCDC has Hispanic, Arabic, Haitian, and Jamaican individuals on its Board, in addition to African-Americans and European-Americans, makes the mix more complex and reduces the potential for racial polarization. Because race relations have such a powerful historical legacy, issues are sometimes viewed as racial in nature when they may have more to do with class, geography, politics, or personality. Of course it is also true that, again given history, many issues do contain within them racial dimensions that need to be acknowledged and addressed effectively. GCDC Board members have recognized that there is more that unites them than divides them, but there is still work to be done in race relations both within this group and the larger community.



Autrie Moore-Williams  
Executive Director

## STAFF

The staff of an intermediary needs sophisticated management, program, and fundraising skills. For GCDC staff, this includes relating to multiple constituencies in and outside the Glades. They must also respond to the demands and pressures these constituencies exert on GCDC and manage a broad agenda without losing focus or momentum. And they must stay grounded in the day-to-day life of the Glades while looking for every opportunity to catalyze action, build capacity, and leverage resources on behalf of the community.

Assembling these skills in a group of people is extremely challenging; finding the full range of skills in a single person is still more so. Identifying suitable candidates to direct GCDC has thus been particularly problematic for GCDC's Board. After a consultant helped establish the office in the Glades, the first director was hired in October of 1991. This person was not a good match for the organization and worked there less than six months. Each of the next two directors brought particular leadership skills to the organization, such as community organizing expertise or knowledge in economic development. Each stayed about two years, and each—for different reasons—left abruptly. In both these cases, the Board stepped in and played a very hands-on role in managing the turmoil of the transition process and avoiding the destabilizing potential of the leadership change. GCDC's current director, Autrie Moore-Williams, assumed her role in the spring of 1997. She was well known to the Board because she joined the GCDC staff when the office was first opened in 1990. She was also well known to the community, having lived in the Glades most of her life.

GCDC has placed significant priority on hiring local staff, both to enhance its connections to the community and to offer residents opportunities for work in the Glades. Young people with training traditionally leave the Glades in order to find appropriate work. This migration of talent makes it both harder and more important for GCDC to recruit and train locally hired staff.

Staff development has taken a variety of forms—visits to other programs (often along with Board members), attendance at conferences and training sessions, and



Virginia Martin, Assistant Director and  
Economic Development Specialist

several different technical assistance relationships developed over the years. The different forms of technical assistance used by GCDC have been important not only for staff development but also for organizational development, and the forms chosen have been keyed to the organization's stage of development.

In 1992-1993, an experienced community development consultant, Craig Howard, who had credibility with the funders as well as with GCDC's Board and staff, served effectively as an outside sounding board and advisor. He helped place the tasks and difficulties that GCDC faced in the context of similar initiatives in the larger community development field. In the next several years, GCDC had two primary providers of technical assistance, Sharon Edwards of Cornerstone Consulting and Robert Penn of Vanguard Management, who provided assistance for both organizational and program development. Specific areas in which GCDC received technical assistance during this period include strategic planning, board and staff development, proposal development, and board-staff relations. More recently, Vanguard Management has helped GCDC undertake an organizational audit to identify policies and practices in the administrative, personnel, and fiscal areas that needed attention following the organization's shift from being a project of the Community Foundation to being an independent entity. Vanguard has also helped GCDC to begin shaping a long-term development strategy. Over the years, technical assistance has been an important component of a number of Board and staff retreats.

GCDC's current staffing structure includes seven positions that are filled by six full-time employees. The executive director is responsible for implementing the mission of the organization; for directing GCDC's activities and operations, including administration of policies, programs, strategies, and budget; and for board relations, fundraising, communications, and staff management. The assistant director, in addition to general support of the executive director, supervises the staff assigned to GCDC's capacity building agenda, conducts research, prepares grant applications reports, ensures coordination of GCDC's strategies among the three municipalities, and provides technical assistance to Glades residents and organizations. The economic development specialist, responsible for directing GCDC's economic development agenda, confers with government officials and with organizational and community leadership to devise strategies to create jobs and to promote the economic and social viability of the region.

The operations administrator directs, analyzes, and reports on GCDC's financial operations, supervises the secretarial and clerical staff, and maintains the Foundation Resource Library. The community program specialist is responsible for YFDA and other efforts that assist residents and organizations in the Glades to identify problems and develop strategies to address them. The community program specialist also maintains a YFDA Resource Room. The secretary performs secretarial work, operates the communications terminal, assists in the maintenance of the Foundation Resource Library, and supervises the clerk, who assists the secretary in carrying out various reception and clerical functions.

The staff also includes individuals who are hired with specific project support. Currently, part-time employees fill two positions. With support from the Kellogg Foundation, GCDC hired a project coordinator for Acting on the Vision. The other part-time position is an aide to the operations administrator.

## FUNDERS

**Funding Partnership.** A notable aspect of GCDC's history is the story of the funding partnership that has existed since its inception. Most CCIs receive funds in one of two ways: either entirely from one foundation or from a group of foundations that support individual components of the initiative consistent with their particular interests. Rarely do foundations partner with each other to support a common agenda and contribute to a common



Barbara Bell-Spencer,  
Operations Administrator



Corey Wilkerson,  
Community Program Specialist



Carmen Canales, Secretary



Marilyn McGhee, Clerk



Ralph Hamilton of the MacArthur Foundation



David Harris of the MacArthur Foundation



Ronald White of the Mott Foundation

budget. Such an approach has many advantages for the grantee: one set of priorities, one set of negotiations around budget, one set of reports about progress. GCDC has enjoyed these advantages because, as noted earlier, the Community Foundation helped broker an initial funding partnership for development in the Glades with three major foundations. Each had its own reasons for supporting GCDC, but they all agreed to a partnership in which the interests of the whole predominated. For several years, the funding partnership met regularly to review the status of GCDC’s development and to consider ways to improve its performance. These were challenging meetings because none of the foundations were accustomed to working in partnerships and each had its own views and interests. In addition, no clear consensus emerged about appropriate benchmarks for assessing GCDC’s progress or for establishing timeframes in which this progress was expected to occur.

After the first funding cycle, the van Leer Foundation declined to participate further, citing insufficient activity at GCDC in van Leer’s primary area of interest, early childhood education. The MacArthur, Mott, and Community Foundations have continued to fund GCDC’s core operating costs. Although there are fewer formal funding partnership meetings, all three foundations contact and consult each other regularly, especially when promising opportunities or problems arise.

The three foundations cover GCDC’s core operating costs, which range from \$300,000 to \$350,000 annually. GCDC then raises additional funds for projects from foundations or public sources. Examples of project funding include the Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation’s support for YFDA, the Kellogg Foundation’s support for Acting on the Vision (with the Conservation Fund), and multiple county grants for the Western Communities Tourism Alliance, the EDGE Center, and the Glades Guild. GCDC’s 1998-1999 total budget is close to \$400,000.

**Role of funders.** The funders have played a very active role in connecting GCDC with ideas, people, and projects outside the Glades. The following illustrate the many ways in which the current funding partnership has contributed much more than money to GCDC’s work.

- The Community Foundation drew upon its links with other donors to generate interest in and support for the Glades. For example, it hosted a bus trip and walking tour of the Glades for participants from a meeting of the Southeastern Council on Foundations which educated funders about conditions in the Glades and resulted in a \$50,000 grant from an anonymous donor to support work in the area of AIDS. The Community Foundation also introduced the Mary Alice Fortin Foundation to the Glades, which ultimately led to the creation of a new child development center for at-risk children through a partnership with U.S. Sugar, NOAH (a nonprofit housing development organization), the city of South Bay, and GCDC.
- The Mott and MacArthur Foundations brought in national resources that partnered in different ways with GCDC: the National Civic League’s Empowerment Evaluation, MDC’s Vision to Action, and *Potluck in the Muck* are examples of funder-initiated activities in the Glades. These foundations also supported Chapin Hall’s documentation and the different technical assistance providers to which GCDC had access over the years.
- Staff at all three foundations supported the development of GCDC in a number of ways. They spent many hours consulting with GCDC, challenging and supporting staff, and facilitating the organization’s access to people and organizations that could be helpful. MacArthur staff referred numerous consultants and organizations to GCDC, suggesting that they work together on various projects. Several Community Foundation Board members devoted considerable time in meetings with GCDC representatives helping to ensure that GCDC’s transition to independent status went as smoothly as possible. Mott sponsored an institute on racism that took place in the Glades; GCDC was the local host.

## BECOMING A LOCAL INTERMEDIARY: LESSONS FROM EXPERIENCE

The approach to community development selected for the Glades initiative features the development of a local intermediary. This orientation was articulated in theory at the time that GCDC was founded and has since evolved into a functioning reality. Rather than provide services or carry out projects itself, GCDC, as an intermediary, aims to broker connections between the needs of the community on the one hand and previously untapped resources and opportunities on the other; to identify and strengthen common ground among diverse constituencies as a basis for action; and to build capacity and momentum for long-term, sustainable change.

In the seven years since GCDC received its first major funding commitments, it has faced substantial challenges in implementing an intermediary approach, and it has generated significant accomplishments. Many of these challenges and accomplishments are not unique to an intermediary; they can be found in community development initiatives underway across the country. But an intermediary approach does create some distinctive challenges of its own, and affects the character of others; an intermediary also aims for some distinctive accomplishments of its own. A description of GCDC's challenges and accomplishments follows.

### Challenges of an Intermediary

**Tensions between delivering products and building capacity.** As a new enterprise, GCDC experienced significant pressure to produce tangible results in a short time frame in order to generate credibility and attract additional resources. While production can build capacity, too much emphasis on product from an intermediary can undermine the difficult, often behind-the-scenes, task of building the capacity of others to generate these much-needed products. This means that GCDC staff has had to resist the impulse to do for rather than do with; to generate a new idea and run with it rather than taking the time to bring the relevant constituencies along; to do all the outreach and make all the arrangements for an event rather than work to engage others in the effort; or to facilitate a meeting that a community person, with support, could lead. One way that staff has been able to live with this tension is to consider indicators of enhanced capacity—a better functioning organization, an individual who successfully assumes a new leadership role—as important products of its work.

**Difficulty establishing realistic benchmarks of progress.** Instituting clear expectations and benchmarks of progress within particular time frames is difficult in any comprehensive community initiative. With even less established wisdom about the progress of intermediaries than about the progress of comprehensive community initiatives more generally—that is, without a model of what success would look like at different stages in GCDC's development—funders and members of the community early on had questions about whether GCDC was on course and moving fast enough. In 1993, one consultant, Craig Howard, noted that “nagging questions about the project's effectiveness, or indeed, questions as to the ‘worthwhileness’ of the whole venture, result in a never-ending cycle of doubt which carries the force of a self-fulfilling prophecy.”<sup>11</sup> This dynamic was destructive to the very ends the organization aimed to achieve because it undermined the rejuvenation of hope, within and outside the Glades. Without a consensus among funders and GCDC participants about realistic benchmarks and timelines, GCDC was vulnerable to unanswerable questions about pace and effectiveness. As its agenda matured, however, GCDC was increasingly able to articulate specific goals and outcomes for its work.

**Difficulty identifying GCDC's contribution.** Because GCDC is an intermediary, much of its work involves facilitating, brokering, and assigning credit for accomplishments to others. As a result, GCDC has sometimes been hard pressed to demonstrate the impact of its efforts to funders or other observers. Some events or accomplishments, such as the Med-

Mobile, clearly resulted primarily from GCDC's work. GCDC's contributions on other projects, such as the Economic Summit or the Grief and Loss program, were evident but less than fully clear because GCDC undertook them in partnership with others. In other instances, GCDC's contribution was still more indirect or less visible, either because there were more partners involved in the effort or because the benefits from the effort were delayed or manifest in other organizations' progress. The effort to increase tourism in the Glades is an instance in which GCDC was involved with numerous partners; GCDC staff assistance in the preparation of an Empowerment Zone proposal and in the response to the Request for Proposals from the Partnership for Neighborhood Initiatives are examples of contributions that result in progress for other organizations, as they secure funding or develop capacities that may pay off in concrete terms only several years later.

**Risks and limitations of partnerships and other collaborations.** As an intermediary, GCDC is especially likely to enter into partnerships or other collaborations rather than operate programs itself, and is thus especially likely to find itself subject to the strengths and limitations of its partners. While partnerships and other collaborations have the potential to bring new resources to the Glades and to help GCDC establish connections with new constituencies and new audiences, they also have the potential to drain GCDC's resources, to divert its staff, to define the organization's identity, and to place the organization at risk. GCDC found that incubated projects could take longer than expected to become independent, or that they could founder after becoming independent and need GCDC's continued attention. GCDC also encountered quality control problems with activities that were catalyzed by GCDC but over which it had no formal authority. GCDC has learned that each partnership, potential or actual, brings with it challenges that need to be carefully assessed and appropriately managed.

**Problems in being perceived as a gatekeeper.** An intermediary operates to connect organizations in the community to outside contacts or funds and to channel these outside resources to individuals and organizations in the community. However, by these very acts, an intermediary can be seen as a gatekeeper—that is, as an entity that controls others' access to these resources. This perception—or worse, this reality, should it come to pass—is antithetical to the central function of the intermediary, that is, to building the capacity of the community, to express its own voice, both internally and externally. When GCDC received its first grants, it encountered some resentment from other community-based organizations that were volunteer-led or had small staffs and little connection to outside resources. This dynamic is not uncommon, especially in communities that have experienced substantial disinvestment. GCDC faces the challenge of dispelling any notion in the community that it has exclusive access to external funders or that it intends to compete with other nonprofits for outside funding. The fact that both the Community Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation have made grants to other nonprofits in the Glades has helped to dissipate this concern.

**Difficulty diversifying its core funding base.** Most funders hesitate to provide general operating support to their grantees. They prefer to fund specific programs with their own goals, outcomes, and budgets. But this kind of categorical funding puts a great deal of stress on an organization that aims to develop an integrated agenda responsive to the changing needs of the community. It is particularly difficult for an intermediary because its program is essentially the time of its core staff, time that is devoted to various capacity-building and catalytic activities that do not fall neatly along specific project lines. Without funding for its core budget, an intermediary cannot carry out its mission effectively. GCDC has not yet diversified its sources of core support beyond the three foundations that have provided such funding since its inception. These foundations, along with GCDC, face the difficult task of educating other funders about the critical importance of this type of funding.

## GCDC's Accomplishments as an Intermediary

**GCDC has built a strong multi-racial, multi-ethnic Board.** GCDC's Board is a testament to the organization's commitment to find its roots in and derive its legitimacy from the Glades' communities. Despite the endless meetings and frequent turmoil of the early years, and despite the historical forces that sometimes threatened to divide the group, GCDC Board members maintained a willingness to stay engaged with each other to do the hard work of developing an organization.

**GCDC has relationships with multiple constituencies and sectors.** The recognition of GCDC, its identity and contributions, in the community has not been systematically tracked. But, it is clear to all observers that the numbers of individuals and groups that know about GCDC have grown significantly. The frequency with which GCDC is asked to be a broker or fiscal agent, the number of working contacts it has in the governments of the Glades cities and Palm Beach County, and the number of residents who have participated in a community forum, survey, or activity sponsored by GCDC are all indicators of the degree to which GCDC is embedded in the life of the Glades. Each initiative in which GCDC has been involved has widened the organization's network of relationships, relationships that can be mobilized to promote additional community development.

**GCDC is a credible convener of diverse parties.** GCDC has achieved the credibility and legitimacy to bring together a cross section of the community in multiple forums and venues. It has maintained its political independence while vigorously and carefully cultivating relationships throughout the community. The ability to convene across the boundaries of race, age, geography, and economic status is important for community development and essential to the intermediary role.

**GCDC's agenda continues to be community driven.** GCDC's fundamental commitment to citizen engagement continues to be a defining characteristic of the organization. Its agenda is shaped by community priorities that are expressed through a range of formal and informal vehicles. Most of its initiatives, such as the Med-Mobile, HIPPIY, and the Youth Council, involve residents in boards or advisory committees that monitor and support the initiatives' ongoing operations.

**GCDC has sparked a new community ethos of debate and problem solving in the Glades.** GCDC has worked hard to create many different kinds of forums at which people can voice their goals and concerns and can listen to those of others. These forums have given individuals who have little experience in civic involvement an opportunity to develop new skills and to identify the ways in which their own interests and those of others converge. These experiences often move individuals to further engagement and action. In public meetings to describe the Vision to Action process and product, for example, community residents demand more information, action, and inclusion. In addition, some participants in one-time events, such as the Family Forum or the HIV/AIDS workshop, moved on to participate in longer-term projects like the Empowerment Evaluation and Acting on the Vision. Others have volunteered to help with community surveys or to attend public hearings about issues affecting the Glades.

**GCDC has contributed to a growing optimism and activism in the Glades.** There is evidence of growing optimism in the Glades and of a growing activism that both results from and reinforces that optimism. As noted above, the experience of participating in various discussion forums, and the new ethos of discussion and problem solving, has led some to participate in the more activist Vision to Action. Similarly, the experience of participating in VAF, and the sense of possibility it engenders, has moved some to still more activism. Several individuals who participated in Vision to Action, for example, went on to run for

local city council positions. They grounded their campaigns on hard data gathered by VAF surveys, and they used some of the VAF strategies to create their platforms. In an important change from some previous elections, these candidates did not make base appeals to race, suggesting a new tone for elections in the future. Another, more symbolic indication of growing optimism in the Glades emerged from a GCDC-sponsored art contest for elementary school children in preparation for the Belle Glade Charrette. The contest challenged the students to envision what Belle Glade could be in the future. Eight hundred entries were received from four schools. All entrants received certificates, and five banks contributed prize money. One of the prizes went to a boy who drew an intricate picture of a movie theater. On the back of the drawing was a picture of its future location, the loading zone area in the center of town—a barren, concrete site where day laborers are picked up in trucks (see photo in the Prologue). This image represented community transformation for an elementary school student, but it also resonated for many adults. While cycles of hope and despair are common in distressed areas, it appears that a number of factors have converged in the Glades to create the sense that change is possible. GCDC is a pivotal part of this dynamic.

**GCDC has influenced the use of existing resources.** GCDC has increased the awareness and utilization of community resources by promoting networks among organizations and individuals. In addition, the Empowerment Evaluation workshops have encouraged and taught various constituencies to raise questions about the allocation of resources. This has led to overall growth in the community's capacity to hold local organizations accountable for their use of resources received or directed on behalf of the community. In addition, GCDC staff sit on various committees, like the Enterprise Zone Board, and these committees are an important vehicle for influencing the use of existing resources.

**GCDC has brought new resources to the community.** The Glades have secured both public and private resources for development that would not have been brought into the community had GCDC not played the role of broker, incubator, and advocate for these resources. New public resources have supported the move to independence of HIPPY, the Western Communities Tourism Alliance, and the incubator (EDGE) project. The County also requested that GCDC administer the Core Regions Grant Fund for the Glades through which \$25,000 was secured for each of the three municipalities for community improvements. New private resources have come from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, which has supported Acting on the Vision (through the Conservation Fund), the Joseph and Florence Roblee Foundation, which provided a grant for an entrepreneurial training curriculum, and the Lost Tree Village Charitable Foundation, which generally restricted its funding to Northern Palm Beach County but made an exception for GCDC's YFDA work.

**GCDC has built new capacities, individually and organizationally.** In all of its activities, whatever their substantive focus, GCDC includes attention to leadership development and capacity building, in keeping with its mission as an intermediary. The parents reached through the HIPPY parent training program, the youth learning to be entrepreneurs, the residents trained to administer community surveys, and the citizens involved in Acting on the Vision are all developing new skills and new opportunities to exercise these skills. One of the most important of these skills is acquiring and using information to improve decision making in many spheres of life in the Glades. These individual-level changes have implications at the organizational and community levels. In addition, GCDC's technical assistance to emerging organizations, its staff participation on various organizational boards, and its efforts to promote new collaborations and partnerships such as the Youth Council or the Med-Mobile have served to increase capacity at the organizational level, and these changes are strengthening the institutional infrastructure of the community.

# Epilogue

You live in the Glades, and you and a large group of your neighbors have an idea for a project that you are certain would make life better for the community. What you need is a forum for communicating your vision, help in developing strategies and making connections, and other support for launching your enterprise.

You are the leader of a large government agency charged with improving aspects of life in the Glades. You have some plans in mind; the next step is to gather public input and begin to generate public support for these changes. You need a respected, nonpartisan entity to sponsor public forums in the Glades.

Your organization is struggling—it needs new Board members, for their fresh perspectives and their roots in different parts of the community; it needs technical assistance in organization development, including such legal matters as securing nonprofit status; and it needs to secure funding to be effective.

By June 1998, the Glades Community Development Corporation can help you. Its work over the last seven years has positioned it to be an effective and trusted catalyst for change in the Glades.

GCDC plays a wide variety of roles, from helping to create new independent initiatives to sitting on the boards of other organizations, from helping an initiative find funding to locating effective Board members for another enterprise, from convening forums to plan for the future of the Glades to providing office space and other technical assistance to a new project. GCDC remains a small organization. But its influence is considerable, its agenda broad, and its goals ambitious.

This new intermediary has managed to collaborate with many different organizations without jeopardizing its credibility. It has managed to unite with many different segments of the community without favoring any particular group. It has managed to assume leadership without losing its roots in community. And it has managed its evolution as an intermediary carefully. While it works to fill service gaps, it does not operate services. While it brokers new resources for the Glades, it is not a funder. While it advocates for the people of the Glades, it is not involved in partisan politics.

In sum, in its brief history GCDC has remained faithful to its original mission: *to enable people in the Glades communities to design and implement sustainable solutions to their problems and to mobilize . . . resources . . . to support these efforts.*

GCDC's remarkable evolution from 1991 to 1998 has not taken place in a vacuum. Certain propitious conditions have cultivated this growth:

- GCDC began at a time when federal, state, and county officials, as well as scholars and activists, were recognizing the need for strong local vehicles for designing and implementing sustainable approaches to community development.
- GCDC was different enough from other organizations providing services or working on change efforts in the Glades. It found plenty of room to carve out its place in the organizational landscape. It came to be seen as a collaborator and supporter, not a source of competition.
- A number of strong community leaders were willing to work with the funders and each other to build the organization. These leaders had deep roots in the community and deep personal commitments to the Glades, to GCDC, and to the change process.
- Funders have supported GCDC in critical ways. The passion and vision of one local foundation began the enterprise. An effective partnership of national foundations provided core funding for an extended time period, which is essential to the development and functioning of an intermediary. Moreover, the funders actively participated in GCDC's development as an intermediary. They invested in learning about the Glades and its people. They coached and supported the Board and staff. They helped GCDC connect to other organizations, individuals, and funders—both regionally and nationally. They helped to guide and shape GCDC's agenda. They have offered both critical feedback and encouragement.
- Consultants from all over the country have provided valuable technical assistance to GCDC from facilitating Board retreats and conducting an internal organizational audit to helping the organization produce a strategic plan and develop new initiatives.

Absent these particular conditions, GCDC's course would likely have been much less successful. GCDC's evolution, however, is far from complete. As it looks into the future, it faces significant challenges:

- **To secure core funding for the foreseeable future.** An intermediary must be able to rely on stable core funding in order to carry out its mission. Stable funding enables staff to focus fundraising efforts on support for specific projects. GCDC is currently approaching the end of a three-year core funding cycle. While support from its current sources seems assured in the shortrun, these sources have encouraged GCDC to bring other organizations into the funding partnership in order to strengthen its base of core support.
- **To develop and support the staff.** An intermediary, with its broad agenda, requires an enormous array of talents and skills in its staff. Ongoing staff development, support, and training are required to ensure the staff's ability to grow with the complicated and changing demands of GCDC's work.
- **To become better connected with the community development field nationally.** The theory and reality of the intermediary approach to community development are still relatively new. GCDC has valuable experiences and lessons to offer the field. Other community development efforts have knowledge to share with GCDC. Such connections can enhance the field as well as inform GCDC's own work.

- **To have a role in shaping policies affecting the Glades.** GCDC is uniquely positioned to facilitate input from the people of the Glades on a range of policy issues, such as how welfare reform is implemented and how the schools can be improved in the Glades; how the state and county allocate resources for economic development; and how the Glades can play a stronger regional role in the state. GCDC can also promote dialogue on larger development issues like the direction development in the Glades might take if the importance of agriculture to the area declines.

The Glades is a region beset with problems and opportunities. While it faces significant poverty, it also possesses enormous assets in its climate, soil, lake, and, most important, in its people. Meeting and managing this duality calls for an effective community development strategy, one that is suited to addressing the problems and capitalizing on the opportunities in the Glades. Seven years ago, an organization was founded to fill this need. Through the efforts of its Board, staff, funders, and other supporters, GCDC has become an important vehicle for developing and implementing a community development strategy for the Glades. And the leadership of GCDC in its intermediary role is enabling the people of the Glades to build on their assets as they seek creative ideas for solving their problems and effective strategies for exploiting their opportunities.

## METHODOLOGY

This report is the final one in a series that began late in 1993. At that time, Ralph Hamilton of the MacArthur Foundation asked Prue Brown of the Chapin Hall Center to make a brief visit to the Glades to review the status of GCDC's work and of the institutional arrangements surrounding that work. The product was a brief report that included recommendations about the challenges facing GCDC and how they might be addressed.

That visit grew into a series of seven more site visits, each of two to three days' duration, between 1994 and 1997. These visits were sponsored by the Mott and MacArthur Foundations; each visit generated an internal documentation report intended for GCDC and its funders. The purpose of the documentation was to provide an outside perspective on GCDC's development. In order to be as useful as possible to both GCDC and its funders, the documenter shared her observations and offered suggestions to both parties throughout the documentation. To some extent, then, she was a participant in the development process.

During these visits, the documenter interviewed GCDC Board members and staff, members of local and county government, staff of nonprofits, foundation staff and Board members, participants in GCDC initiatives, community members, and technical assistance providers. Interviews focused on GCDC's evolution from both programmatic and organizational perspectives: the strains and accomplishments, the dynamics of development, and the larger context in which that development was taking place. A core group of eight to ten GCDC Board members, staff, and funders were interviewed at each site visit; others were interviewed less frequently. The documenter attended some funder meetings and observed some GCDC Board meetings and retreats. Site visits were often followed by phone interviews with technical assistance providers and other relevant parties who had not been available during the visits. Between visits, the documenter maintained regular phone contact with GCDC staff, from whom she received information packets containing Board meeting minutes, proposals, and other materials.

To prepare this final report, Ms. Brown was joined by Paul Stetzer, a photographer. Together they made three visits to the Glades between July 1997 and February 1998. Mr. Stetzer made two additional site visits in May and June 1998.

## ENDNOTES

1. These data from the 1990 Census include Census tracts 80.01, 80.02, 81.01, 81.02, 82.01, 82.02, 82.03, 83.01, and 83.02. They cover the three cities and the unincorporated areas of the Glades.
2. These Census data are from the Florida Glades Community Rural Empowerment Zone Application, June 1994. The Census tracts included in the application are 80.01, 80.02, 82.01, 82.02, 83.01, and 83.02.
3. Kingsley, G. T., McNeely, J. B., and Gibson, J. O. *Community Building: Coming of Age*. Baltimore: The Development Training Institute, 1997; Kubisch, A. et al. *Voices from the Field: Learning from Comprehensive Community Initiatives*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 1997; Mattessich, P. W. and Monsey, B. R. *Community Building: What Makes It Work*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997; Stone, R. (Ed.) *Core Issues in Comprehensive Community-Building Initiatives*. Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children, 1996; and Walsh, J. *Stories of Renewal: Community Building and the Future of Urban America*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1996.
4. This report focuses on the development of a particular type of community organization, a community development intermediary. This focus is not intended to imply the absence of other organizations in the community. Indeed, a number of social service, health, youth, educational, community development, and training organizations serve the Glades. What was missing at GCDC's inception was an organization that could help the people and organizations of the Glades design and implement a broad change agenda across different sectors and different constituencies.
5. The organization is referred to as GCDC from this point forward though it did not technically assume this name until its incorporation in 1995.
6. Kubisch, A. et al. *Voices from the Field: Learning from Comprehensive Community Initiatives*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 1997.
7. Having recently incorporated, the EDGE Center will no longer need GCDC to act as its fiscal agent.
8. Dodson, D. L. and Thomasson, J. K. "Building Communities of Conscience and Conviction: Lessons from Recent Experience." MDC, Inc., 1997.
9. This story comes from Juanita Malone, President of GCDC's Board.
10. These dynamics are not unusual in the relationships between foundations and the community initiatives they support. They involve issues of race, class, history, wealth, and access to power. See Brown, P. and Garg, S. "Foundations and Comprehensive Community Initiatives: The Challenges of Partnership." Chicago: Chapin Hall Center for Children Discussion Paper, 1997.
11. Technical assistance memorandum, 1993.



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