EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2009, a Blue Ribbon Committee was convened to develop an Action Plan in response to the significant decrease in participation and program offerings at the MLK Jr. Center. Through the committee’s work, several key goals and recommendations were identified for the Center. Over the past five years, the Center has flourished while implementing the plan. In response to the success of accomplishing those recommendations, a new 2015 Blue Ribbon Committee was assembled to update the past Action Plan. A new Action Plan will allow the Center to continue the growth and momentum over the course of the next five years.

The 2015 Blue Ribbon Committee reviewed: the MLK Jr. neighborhood surveys conducted in the fall of 2015: current programs offered at the Center: program requests by participants: and the demographic that utilizes Center programs. Through a recommendation from the Shasta County Grand Jury to develop programs for teens in Shasta County, the Committee held a teen focus group with local youth. The outcome from the focus group identified the need for a one-stop website for teens to find programs and events geared for their population, and a safe hang-out location that addresses their current transportation limitations.

Committee members acknowledged growth was needed in three key areas: 1) parent based programs, 2) expanding multicultural program offerings and special events, and 3) creating a better awareness of the Center’s activities, events and accomplishments. Additionally, Committee members recommended that the Center revisit expanding the current after school program, which was established in the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee with Cypress Elementary to allow youth from other schools to attend.

The Action Plan also identifies five primary goals with defined metrics to measure success:

1) Develop, coordinate and implement programs focused on teens.

2) Focus will be placed upon cross-advertising programs and resources with other local agencies. Increasing public access to these resources will help better meet the needs of the community while building strong partnerships.

3) Build new relationships while strengthening current partnerships to expand programming at the Center.

4) Develop and implement parent-based programs.

5) Develop a better awareness throughout the community of the Center, its achievements and events.
Through strong partnerships, community involvement and a nurturing staff, the MLK Jr. Center has re-emerged as a thriving community Center. The updated Action Plan provides the road map to solidify the Martin Luther King Jr. Center as a treasured amenity of our community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2015 Blue Ribbon Committee Update provided these specific recommendations relative to the operation of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center (MLK).

**Ongoing Recommendations- The Committee recommends that the Center:**

- Continue to partner with the Redding School District to utilize the MLK Center as a satellite site to the Cypress School After-School Education and Safety (ASES) program to best meet the after-school care needs for the children in the neighborhood.

- Begin discussions with school district officials to open the MLK program to include children from other schools. The after-school program currently operates with the K-5 program for children attending Cypress School.

- Continue to emphasize on youth and family participation in Center activities while increasing the program offerings.

- Continue to expand multicultural programs beyond holiday celebrations by partnering with other organizations with similar goals relative to interpersonal relations, tolerance and understanding. Additionally, partner with the Shasta County Youth Violence Prevention Council to develop and offer youth (convicted of hate or bullying crimes) a program to complete as part of their sentence.

- Continue to develop a modern and on-trend marketing plan for the Center that includes communication plans targeted at the individual, family, the neighborhood, and the community at large.

- Continue to augment the Redding School District after-school staffing with additional City staff members.

- Continue to maintain a coordinator to offer activities outside of the after-school program. The Center Coordinator will continue to: maintain safety; ensure consistency to offerings; market; and staff the complementary programs; report any maintenance needs; direct activities and act as a liaison to the neighborhood and community.
• Continue to inform participants of city-wide recreational and educational programming opportunities.

• Continue to be a presence in the community through an on-going extension of diverse cultural and community events. Participation in these community events will continue to solidify their diverse presence in the community while increasing participation in the MLK Center’s programs.

New Recommendations- The Committee recommends that the Center:

• Focus on expanding programming beyond elementary and middle age youth. An emphasis will be to develop new programs and special events for teens.

• Develop parent-based programming with an emphasis to extend programs to include single and multigenerational parents. Additionally, special events and programs will be coordinated focusing on families as a whole.

• Explore new ways to expand the After-School Program. Furthermore, consider for ways to offer tutoring programs to those students who are unable to attend the current After School Program.

• Focus will be placed upon cross-advertising programs and resources with other local agencies. Increasing public access to these resources will help better meet the needs of the community while building strong partnerships.

• The Center will develop partnerships with other agencies to offer educational, language and cultural courses to minority and marginalized families.
BACKGROUND

Over the course of the past five years, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center has shown outstanding progress. The Center has accomplished all of the recommendations in the Action Plan developed by the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee. The Center is flourishing and continues to grow.

Strong partnerships have been the foundation to the many successes of the Center. Notable partnerships include: the Redding School District, Cypress Elementary School, the Enterprise School District, Shasta County Public Health, Sunset Rotary Club, Simpson University Strike Team, Youth Violence Prevention Council, and the Shasta County Multicultural Board. These partnerships have furthered the offerings and mission of the Center.

Currently, the Center has programs operating six days a week, Monday-Saturday. The programs are open to any child of appropriate age. Areas of programming include: Kings Brotherhood and Positively Girls Club, Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (S.T.E.M.) classes, Kids Night, Outdoor Living Skills and a Saturday Sandlot program. During the majority of these programs, a nutritious meal is served to participants. Additionally, the
Center’s partnership with the Redding School District has established a satellite After-School Program (ASP) at the Center. The ASP is a core program and utilized heavily by neighborhood families. During the summer, a Day Camp program is provided for eight weeks to the community with a reduced rate with scholarship assistance. Participants also receive a free lunch through a partnership with the Enterprise School District. These programs in conjunction with each other provide a solid programmatic foundation to build upon.

In addition to the weekly programs, the Center has established several annual special events including a Halloween Carnival, a Thanksgiving Dinner, a Christmas Celebration, Spring BBQ, National Night Out, and more. These special events are well-attended as anticipated by the Blue Ribbon Committee’s recommendations. The Center has also partnered with other agencies to host cultural events at the Center. These partnerships have included The Life Center and the Sons of Italy. The Shasta County Multicultural Advisory Board continues to utilize the Center for their monthly meetings and multicultural events including the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday and the “I Have a Dream” speech celebration.

Since the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee, the Martin Luther King Jr. Center has been renovated with several significant projects. The Sunset Rotary Club of Redding donated labor and materials to upgrade the kitchen including the installation of a double oven, convection oven, a small dishwasher, new counters and cabinets, a commercial refrigerator and freezer, among other donations. In 2010, the MLK Center was awarded a grant through Home Depot to replace the flooring in the Center. Concurrently, Disney Incorporated was offering a ‘Give a Day, Get a Day’ community service project. The Center participated and had the interior of the Center painted by numerous volunteers. A local Interior Designer, Katherine Wilson, donated her time to develop a color palette for the Center. Patrick Mahoney, owner of Hand Painted Houses, managed the project.

In 2009, a new computer lab was established through a generous donation of eighteen computers by N-Computing, a local computer software agency. A lending library was established utilizing a collection of books the Center had been given. A library card system was developed; books were catalogued and coded by reading level for ease of participants. The Sunset Rotary Club built a small community garden on the south side of the building. In 2011, through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and the Rotary Club of Redding, a new playground was installed for elementary and middle-school aged children. In conjunction, the MLK Park bathrooms were updated to ADA code and a wheelchair accessible pathway was constructed. In June 2014, volunteers and materials from Orchard Supply and Hardware installed a small patio at back of the Center allowing participants to utilize the space. During the Summer of 2015, participants built a small tea garden outside the library windows. Lastly, in
November 2015, the Shasta County Multicultural Board funded new paint for the Preschool Room and tables for the Center.

The Center has maintained a Coordinator at the Center to implement and develop the Action Plan from the 2009 Blue Ribbon Committee. Additionally, the Center has six part-time employees that work with the ASP and run the enrichment programs offered at the Center. Center staff utilizes social media, door to door marketing, and flyers to communicate programs and events to the community. All programs and events offered at the Center are also included in Redding Recreation’s seasonal activity guides that are distributed to schools, businesses and families four times a year.

A new community committee was convened in November 2015 to update the Action Plan. The committee was formed of community leaders and individuals from the Shasta County Multicultural Board, Shasta Public Health, and Faith Works at Francis Court. Input was also provided from residents in the MLK Center neighborhood. The new committee established a five-year Action Plan that will begin implementation in 2016. The new Action Plan will allow the Martin Luther King Jr. Center to continue to grow the number of children and families served through new and helpful programs and activities.

COMMITTEE WORK

The first meeting was convened on November 19, 2015 and held a total of ten meetings. Committee members were: Jan Lopez, Doris Bond, Eddie McAllister, Paula Percy, Randa Ward, Melissa Taiji, Brett Soloman, and Layla Mackay. Center of Redding Commissioner John Wilson and Martin Luther King Jr. Center Coordinator Christina Massey were also committee members.

The majority of committee members have seen and participated in the evolution of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center (MLK). Members reviewed current programs and special events, the 2009 Action Plan, and results from the 2015 Neighborhood survey. The Shasta County Grand Jury recommended that new teen activities be developed in the county. The Community Service
Advisory Commission requested the committee review the option of developing teen programs at the MLK Center. Committee members sought a Teen Focus Group be formed to better determine what teens may be interested in or feel they need. A Teen Focus Group of local youth was assembled on December 15, 2015 and results (Appendix B) were reviewed by the Blue Ribbon Committee at the December 17, 2015 meeting. The main concerns from teens were they don’t have a designated and developed hang out site with entertainment, transportation options and food. Additionally, they feel they aren’t connected with the few events that are geared towards teens in Redding.

Another main theme from surveys and committee members is the need to increase program opportunities for families as a whole, parents (single or coupled), and multigenerational families. The committee determined that parenting classes that offered childcare would be beneficial to the community. Additionally, members felt that the Center needs to continue to explore options to expand the current ASP to meet the needs of neighborhood students outside of Cypress School.

The committee concluded its meetings on February 11, 2016 and endorsed the attached Action Plan.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

1. Develop, coordinate and implement programs focused on teens.
   • Partner with other agencies to develop special events for teens.
   • Work with the school districts to put special events and programs for teens in the daily school bulletin.
• Work with school clubs to help develop a Center-wide social media page which will connect teens to programs and special events geared toward them.

• Explore transportation opportunities with RABA and local taxi companies.

• Review offering a mentoring program for teens and bullied youth.

• Work to develop job skills and job opportunities for teens in high school.

Potential partners include: The Smart Center, Youth Violence Prevention, Shasta College, Redding Recreation, and Shasta County Public Health.

2. **Focus will be placed upon cross-advertising programs and resources with other local agencies. Increasing public access to these resources will help better meet the needs of the community while building strong partnerships.**

   • Partner with other local agencies such as Shasta Public Health, Shasta Regional Foundation and more to cross-advertise program opportunities to the community.

   • Help implement the Time banking program in our neighborhood.

   • Communicate resource opportunities to the neighborhood via social media posts and flyers.

   • Advertise upcoming programs and events in the Center’s activity guide that disburses throughout the neighborhood and to participants.

Potential partners include: Shasta Regional Foundation, Shasta Public Health, WIC, People of Progress, Shasta Food Bank, Redding Recreation, and One Safe Place.

3. **Building new relationships while strengthening current partnerships to expand programming at the Center.**

   • Solidify partnership with Linden Apartments and Faithworks at Frances Court to develop more programs and participation from residents.

   • Collaborate with various multicultural agencies in Shasta County to expand multicultural programs and special events at the Center.

   • Develop a relationship with the local middle and high schools to connect with teens, build programs and communicate programs effectively.

   • Increase the Center’s awareness of other agencies and their missions to expand program opportunities for the community.
Potential partners include: Shasta County Citizens Advocating Respect, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Shasta County Multicultural Board, The Beloved Community, The Life Center, and the Redding School District.

4. **Develop and implement parent based programs.**

   - Develop parenting courses that offer childcare (Love and Logic, Triple P parenting courses).
   - Coordinate evening preschool programs to accommodate working parents (playgroups, music and movement courses, etc.).
   - Communicate resource opportunities to support single, married and multigenerational parents through social media, flyers, and the Center’s reader board.

Potential partners include: First 5 Shasta, Shasta Public Health, WIC, Faithworks, Shasta Early literacy partnership, Redding Library, Head Start and Redding Recreation.

5. **Develop a better awareness throughout the community of the Center, its achievements and events.**

   - Create a presentation showcasing the achievements the Center has made over the last five years including future goals to present to community groups.
   - Host an Open House and Luncheon with potential partners.
   - Attach the presentation to the Center’s social media pages and website.
   - Promote the Center’s logo and brand through the use of small marketing tools in addition to utilizing it on all of the Center’s media outlets and flyers.
   - Participate in community events such as the Christmas Parade, Redding Rodeo, Whole Earth Festival, etc.
   - Continue the use of social media pages, activity guides, and newsletters to keep the community current on programs and events.

Potential Partners Include: Asphalt Cowboys, Viva Downtown, Central Valley Multicultural Events, the Veterans Parade, Rotary Clubs, Lion Clubs, Soroptimists, and others.
APPENDIX A

COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAMS FOR THE MLK CENTER AS PRIORITIZED BY THE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE

**Highest Priority Program Ideas**

- Teen Job Opportunities- Connect high school aged teens with job opportunities and skill building courses.
- Parent Programs- Parenting courses with preschool enrichment and childcare programs.
- Farmers Market (Memorial to Labor Day).
- Multicultural cooking programs.
- Athletic programs for kids and adults.
- Summer Nights Done Right program (operate June to August)-weekly events occurring once a week for families including cooking classes, basketball tournaments, concerts, and barbeques.
- Connect participants with recreation scholarship opportunities.
- Respect, Understanding and no Hate course for teens convicted of hate or bullying crimes to participate in at the Center in relation to cultural, gender, economic background, etc.
- Partner Positively Girls Club and Kings Brotherhood with local clubs such as the Women’s Fund and Sunset Rotary Club for mentoring.

**Priority Program Ideas**

- Adopt a Grandparent program- work with local Senior Centers.
- Partner with local clubs such as Rotary clubs to have the kids help them with service projects.
- Sports programs (Shasta Skippers, Baton and Flag Twirling, Fencing, etc.)
- Time banking with Shasta County Public Health.
• Bilingual activities to promote communication and community inclusion
• ESL and minority language classes.
• Teen Programs- High School partners with Elementary and Middle Schools to develop a Big Brother/Big Sister program.

**Prospective Program Idea’s**

• Adult enrichment and Personal Interest classes (Genealogy Classes, Floral, Photography, Fitness, etc.).
• Moms-only and Dads-only nights.
• Cooking classes.
• Railroad Education Programs

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**APPENDIX B- TEEN FOCUS GROUP**

The 2015 Blue Ribbon Committee determined that a teen focus group should be facilitated. The purpose of the focus group was to determine what type of programs and events teens felt they needed and would like to participate in. Martin Luther King Jr. Center Coordinator Christina Massey assembled eight local high school teens on the evening of December 15, 2015. Participants met at Starbucks and over coffee they answered questions, gave information and ideas to develop teen programming.

**What type of programs/ extracurricular activities do you participate in now?**

• Cheerleading at School
• Dance and Choir at School
• Help at a retirement Center
• Softball
• YMCA
• Sports at School
• Instruments at School
• Landscaping Job
• School in general monopolizes time

If you participate in our programs what do you like about them?
• Liked going to Sacramento for Positively Girls Club
• Quilting and Sleepovers
• Playing sports with Mr. Steven

What do you dislike?
• Don’t dislike them but busy after school between homework and school activities
• Younger kids and older kids mixing

How do you stay connected with events in Redding?
• Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat)
• Word of Mouth
• Friends

If there was a website that advertised events and program geared towards teens in Redding would you utilize it?
• Yes
• No, not allowed on social media
• Put it in the schools daily bulletin in addition to website

What social media site would you use the most?
• Facebook
• Instagram

In Redding, what activities or places are available to teens?
• Dutch Bros
• Mall
• Starbucks
• Movies
• Barnes and Nobles
• Turtle Bay
• Sundial Bridge
• River Trail

What types of programs do you wish were available for you?

• Gym with a café and rock climbing wall
• Hobby based programs
• Free events or cheap
• Somewhere to hang out and watch non kiddie movies
• Jobs- School overwhelms us with information about college and careers after high school but I need a job now to do stuff.
• Wi-Fi access

What limitations do you have that keep you from participating in events and programs in Redding?

• Transportation- doesn’t have a car and parents don’t want to take us or can’t afford to take us.
• Money- can’t afford it
• School monopolizes a lot of time
• Safety- my mom won’t let me do stuff unless she feels like its safe