



**Afterschool
is OK!**

Oak Grove Community Center

Spring 2011

The Community Impact Initiative

Using a recreational center located in the center of Oak Grove Housing the Community Impact Initiative brings new meaning to community learning by transforming a neighborhood into a 3 block classroom. Operating under the direction of NOVO Ministries, the Community Impact Initiative serves more than 300 children less than 100 ft. from their front doors.



A welcoming atmosphere!

Who?

The Community Impact Initiative was created by NOVO Ministries in the fall of 2003 with the goal to serve families located in housing development sites by providing a safe atmosphere for their children to actively engage in learning activities. In partnership with the Oklahoma City Housing Authority, NOVO Ministries is able to offer the Community Impact Initiative to 17 housing projects three hours a day Monday through Friday. Utilizing the support of the Girl Scouts Association and Boy Scouts Association, the Community Impact Initiative is able to offer comprehensive training to each staff member which also allows the Community Impact Initiative to bring Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts programming to an often underserved population.

What?

The Community Impact Initiative takes pride in preparing their staff and volunteers for all aspects of the program. This value for professional development is seen as they all are required to complete nine phases of training prior to working with the children. "We believe it is critical for our staff to be prepared and confident in their skills," commented Program Supervisor Valerie Sherrer. This is why NOVO has created their own staff orientation and training system, designed to specifically address the needs of their target populations. While being located in 17 sites can be challenging, Sherrer believes that the comprehensive nature of this training, has greatly impacted the consistency in her staffing. NOVO experiences very low turn-over rate in their staff.

FOCUS:

The mission of NOVO Ministries is to reach, train, and mentor underserved, inner-city children in important life-changing relationships: physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

How?

Reach– The Community Impact Initiative strives to reach as many children as possible, “there are over 40,000 Oklahoma children between the ages 4-12 living in poverty. We would like to reach all of them someday,” says Sherrer. By implementing training phases such as Guided Program Observation and the Reaching Our Inner City Training, staff members are able to gain hands on training in the art of positive youth development.

Train– NOVO Ministries is able to train each staff member to educate students in the practice of decision making and life skills by incorporating Christian principles into daily activities. Staff members are also required to receive Tutoring Training specifically for math and reading!

Mentor– The Community Impact Initiative aims to enhance the students’ academic experience, by providing a welcoming atmosphere where students can enjoy supervised fun! Sherrer comments that her staff members are trained to provide strong positive support.

Win!

NOVO, the Latin word for “change”, means just that for the Oak Grove Housing Community. Through comprehensive training staff members are able to impact nearly 400 children, equipping them with invaluable tools that will propel them into excellence!



“My favorite activity at NOVO is story time”
-Bianca



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OKAN is a statewide initiative coordinated by the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.



Brought to you by Marissa Lightsey,
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The Million Dollar Question...

When asked how NOVO Ministries would utilize unlimited funding, Sherrer replied, “I would love to be able to provide more full time staff members to each of my sites and expand to additional neighborhoods.”

Sherrer also commented that although more office space and office materials would be needed, the Community Impact Initiative is always in need of more classroom equipment and materials – books, art materials, legos, computers, and musical instruments.