CASE STUDY: COMMUNICATIVE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AT SOUTH EAST YOUTH ASSOCIATION

Peter Simionides

A Thesis

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Committee:

Tom Mascaro, Advisor

John Dowd

Clayton Rosati
This study examines the communicative identity of the South East Youth Association (SEYA) during a time of mission and funding transition. The study examines identity construction as defined by the linguistic turn comparing the fluid identity discussed in organizational communication literature to nonprofits’ typically stable identities, emerging from their mission statements and core values. The Communicative Constitution of Organizations (CCO) allows communication to be understood not as a peripheral aspect of organizing, but as the central phenomena to organizing. The adoption of a CCO lens leads this study to build on the principle that communication and organizational identity are one in the same. This study asks how SEYA’s communication patterns impacted how successfully they were able to fulfill their mission during this time of change. Interviews conducted with key organizational stake holders reveal not only a capacity and willingness to evaluate their communication patterns and messages, which provides background information on the transition, but also how the organization’s identity is both constituted and challenged by these communication practices. The SEYA transition unfolds by virtue of the multilayered and complex phenomena revealed in the interviews, a construct that merits further study. Qualitative analysis of SEYA’s communication determined that the distress attending their recent transition resulted from several gaps in communication and mission application, exacerbated by extra-communication that developed outside the immediate control of the organization.
“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer
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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

It should be noted that pseudonyms have been used for all individuals, organizations, cities, and other identifying information within this study. It was the wishes of the subjects as well as the committee and human subjects review board that the study be anonymous in order to avoid negatively effecting the relationship between the parties involved. Every precaution has been taken to respect the anonymity of individuals involved in order to ensure that no harm comes to any of the participants.

Midville is at a turning point in its history. The change from a vibrant manufacturing hub to a faltering economy has put increased burdens on low-income families. Nonprofit organizations have typically played a vital role for urban families, especially by providing short-term or specialized support for human services. One of the most important is after-school programs, which enable working parents to concentrate on their jobs without worrying about the wellbeing of their children. In addition, supplemental care programs often provide nutritional supplements in the diets of children from low-income families. This study focuses on a small network of nonprofit organizations and employees and their challenge to sustain supplemental school programs for families and children in Midville. In recent years, this network has been affected by changes in funding, communication issues that have complicated the network’s mission, and communication breakdowns that seem to be hampering or changing the structures serving families and their children. This study seeks to explore this organizational communication dynamic and analyze its effectiveness.

Understanding the communication and structural challenges for nonprofit services in Midville requires an understanding of the geographical and economic context. From 2014-2015 Midville underwent a comprehensive planning process with the goal of revitalizing this former
manufacturing hub. The fastest growing manufacturing industries in the early 1900s made their homes in Mid County (reference withheld to uphold anonymity). However, like many Midwestern cities, Midville has been declining since the 1950s as the economic boom of early 20th century manufacturing has slowed (Robinson, 2014). This has led to a steady decrease in Midville’s population since 1950. In 2012 the city began reworking its Downtown Development Plan, which had been created in 2003, and launched a new Midville Master Plan with the help of, an outside consulting firm (reference withheld to uphold anonymity). A draft of this new plan was presented in 2014, and revised through community meetings and consultations with local stakeholders. According to the outside firm a well formulated strategic plan may be what Midville needs to survive the 21st century, not unlike nearby Midwestern cities.

While Midville holds valuable assets, among them international tourist attractions, two top tier hospitals, Midville Christian University, and an international manufacturing plant, it also faces a series of obstacles to economic sustainability. The population has steadily declined every year since 1950, so Midville finds itself with more housing units than are needed. An excess of 3,500 housing units has resulted in blighted and vacant property leading to a weakened real estate market. There are now 5,000 fewer households, representing 44,000 fewer people, shopping at grocery stores, retail outlets, and restaurants (reference withheld to uphold anonymity). As businesses have made less money, fewer dollars have been invested in the city resulting in commercial enterprises fleeing the downtown.

Fewer people results in a diminishing tax base creating the challenge of maintaining many infrastructural resources. The 110 miles of roads that must be maintained were built with a larger population in mind. This is true of most infrastructural resources in Midville, causing taxes to rise on a smaller and more impoverished community. While the population of Midville City
has declined, the surrounding suburban metropolitan statistical area (MSA), has grown at an inverse rate (Midville Comprehensive Plan). “This makes for a self-perpetuating problem of ever higher tax rates in the city as a means of offsetting smaller numbers of tax payers with ever higher demands for social and other services” (Midville Comprehensive Plan, p. 4).

As Midville has fewer resources to allocate to city improvements, education, and infrastructure, a larger burden has been placed on the city’s nonprofit organizations (NPOs). NPOs have become a means to ameliorate the chronic problems facing Midville. In 2015 NPOs in Mid County reported $1.8 billion in revenue to the Internal Revenue Service (NCCS, 2015). This was a 129% increase over 1995, despite only a 10% increase in the overall number of NPOs (NCCS, 2015). While these organizations accomplish change within the city, larger systemic problems still need to be addressed. Midville needs to reduce its school space by about 350,000 square feet (about 100 fewer classrooms) (Midville Comprehensive Plan). At one point Midville boasted four high schools. In fall 2015 the two remaining high schools, Thompson and Edwards, merged. Despite fears of cross-school (gang) violence, the merger was decided as inevitable because of the need to concentrate and consolidate resources (reference withheld to uphold anonymity).

In addition to having to contend with a declining school population in too many underutilized school buildings, the declining economy in the city has forced families and school systems to rely on external support from nonprofit groups. South East Youth Association (SEYA) is classified as a Family Services NPO (Melissa Data, 2015). Their slogan focuses on impacting youth to the glory of God. They develop their programming in an attempt to value: God, child-centered programming, spiritual formation, interpersonal relationships, holistic development, dignity and respect, diversity, and personal safety. SEYA is unique in its specific
geographic scope as well as its holistic vision. While Midville overall faces many challenges, the Southeast is especially blighted.

The word blight is used here because it is the word used by the city’s comprehensive plan to describe some of the challenges it faces. Blight is included in a list of threats to the city including tax delinquent properties, abandoned houses, crime, chaos among others, which are never given any concrete definition. It is mentioned that the city has an estimated “2,773 blighted properties,” but what that means is never defined (Midville Comprehensive Plan, p. 36). Blight has often been poorly defined with “78 different legal definitions,” and many saying you know it when you see it, leaving it to be subjectively labeled (Herstad, 2014). Blight is traditionally used to describe a cancerous like plant disease, but has been adapted with a similar meaning in the urban context where the city is the organism being infected.

Because of this, the subjective labeling of blight can be used to designate a neighborhood or group of people as being invasive or threatening to the overall stability of a city. When this is done, policies of enucleation occur, where the city sees its duty as cleansing itself from this disease often done by demolition homes and relocating certain populations (Midville Comprehensive Plan). This is especially relevant to the South East neighborhood as it has been labeled especially blighted. The median household income of the SEYA neighborhood is $19,375 (City-Data, 2015) compared to $25,817 in Midville proper and $48,081 across the state (United States Census Bureau, 2015).

One of the biggest ways SEYA sees their mission statement actualized is through their afterschool program. Through December 2015 SEYA operated their program in Washington (PreK-2) and Lincoln (grades 3-5) Elementary, which is open to any students in the Southeast (City-Data, 2015). 2010 weighted test averages for the state rated Washington 11 and Lincoln 5,
with Midville Schools averaging 45, where 0 is worst and 100 is best (City-Data, 2015). Washington Elementary, located in the Jefferson Road neighborhood, is a community in which 67% live below the poverty line (City-Data, 2015). Their afterschool program consists of a snack, exercise, tutoring, hands-on work with teachers, and educational enrichment. The enrichment portion ranges from science experiments to art projects to working in SEYA’s community garden, as well as exposing students to different occupations to promote vocational awareness. Their programs often provide more services than afterschool programs operating in other Midville City Schools. Dan Phillips, Executive Director of SEYA, explains that some parents have students in an SEYA program and students in other publicly funded programs. Parents tell Phillips that when students in the SEYA program come home they aren’t hungry, but students that participate in other programs come home wanting something to eat (preliminary interview with Dan Phillips, October 30, 2015).

Despite the positive impact SEYA has been having in Midville City schools, in December 2015, they withdrew their program from both schools. According to Phillips, City Funding, SEYA’s nonprofit grant partner, increased restrictions on their programs, limiting things such as enrichment time, staff-to-student ratios, and even preventing them from providing a snack unless they are the same snacks as other schools in the district. Because SEYA is no longer able to provide its holistic program, they have decided to withdraw from schools and host their program at their own facility, partnered with Little City Church. SEYA employees worried about the direct impact this new arrangement would have on their programs and the school communities they had been serving. SEYA has now revised its mission and reshaped its programs, including a transformation of their afterschool program. They incorporated changes
including more direct spiritual development, educational mentoring, and a college scholarship system for students who participate in their program.

Because of this crucial moment, as well as SEYA’s unique identity as a nonprofit, this case presents an ideal site for a study of nonprofit identity negotiation and communication structures and practices. The question I want to ask is: How is SEYA’s identity communicated/perceived differently to/by its members, funders, and clients? This question, along with other related questions, guides the study. Do the reasons parents enroll students in SEYA programs match SEYA goals? Does SEYA communicate a consistent identity to members, funders, and clients?

Studying SEYA also intersects many of my personal interests. As a native of Midville, I have a vested interest in seeing it prosper as it enters a new period in its history. The city has a lot of difficult obstacles to face, but in preliminary conversations, various directors of Midville nonprofits have expressed hope in a new energizing group in Midville’s downtown. A diverse core of young adults has taken interest in Midville. This follows nationwide trends of neo-localism, where movements supporting small business, from microbreweries to farmers markets and buy-local campaigns, have gained recent traction (Robinson, 2014).

Additionally, as one of the most blighted areas of Midville needing redevelopment, the population in the Southeast is at risk of being pushed to the side by the larger economic mechanism of gentrification. This group needs to be given a voice and be included in the revitalization of their city. SEYA recognizes this and has taken interest in seeing the Southeast flourish. This study presents research that addresses these ground-level practical problems from a communication-structure perspective (Mumby, 2014). The goal of this study is not simply to further theory, or to explore the uniqueness of NPOs, but also to try to help SEYA shape the
transition of their afterschool programs. It is a critical time to be involved in Midville as a whole and SEYA in particular.
CHAPTER II. RATIONALE & LITERATURE REVIEW

Rationale

Studying the communicative identity of SEYA is important for several reasons. Midville is at a crucial point in its development process, and local nonprofits play a key role as major stakeholders in lobbying for and effecting change. Nationwide, nonprofits are filling gaps as federal spending cuts have limited government run programs (Phillips, 1991). Though nonprofits have taken on this larger responsibility, little research has been done on nonprofits pertaining to the characteristics that make them unique. This study hopes to begin filling that gap by studying SEYA through an organizational communication theory lens. Organizational communication, as will be discussed further below, is uniquely equipped to meet the challenges of examining nonprofit organizations (NPOs).

The number of NPOs (in the civil sector) is growing in the United States and around the globe: “The U.S. nonprofit sector has more civilian employees than the federal government” (Lewis, 2005, p. 239; Kirby & Koschmann, 2012). Salamon stated, “key criteria for defining the sector are debated; however, generally accepted guidelines include that set of entities that are (a) organized, (b) private, (c) non-profit-distributing, (d) self-governing, (e) voluntary to some meaningful extent, and (f) of public benefit, ‘that is they serve some public purpose and contribute to the public good’” (cited in Lewis 2005, p. 240). The rising number of NPOs demonstrates in a small way the large and growing impact they have on our society, existing as primary entities for collective action and civic engagement (Kirby & Koschmann, 2012).

It is important to not only observe the growth of the nonprofit sector, but also to understand why it has emerged in this manner. The development of a “poverty industry” has created a vested interest in minimizing the amount of government spending going towards
poverty alleviation (Phillips, 1991). “As early as 1967, The Wall Street Journal showed how major U.S. corporations, particularly in the major urban centers, were finding enough profit in Democratic Great Society social programs to become an important lobbying force on their behalf” (Phillips, 1991, p. 41). This leads not only to the creation of poverty alleviation programs for the economic gains of those in power, but also to the suppression of government funded programs.

These cuts came heavily in the 1980s and continued into the 1990s. Urban Development programs and grants were sharply reduced or completely ended during this time. “The Reagan and [George H. W.] Bush administrations continued to transfer program responsibility back to the states with inadequate financial support” (Phillips, 1993, p. 51). These cuts and shifts at the federal level led to many states having to make huge cuts in their spending, pulling funding from infrastructure maintenance, to education, to programs ensuring food and water quality (Phillips, 1993).

Once Reagan policies freed the everyday American through liberating the market “from excessive government regulation and subsidized government competition,” Americans were once again free to “enjoy the fruits of one’s labor without excessive taxing” (Reagan, cited in Philips, 1993, p. 53). This fostering of free enterprise came with a cost, often hitting hardest those belonging to or below the middle class: “As public outlays on roads, schools and health came under pressure, the predictable results—worsened commuter gridlock, crowded classrooms and shortchanged hospitals and clinics—confronted ordinary families with either accepting lost services or paying new taxes or fees or higher bills. . . . these losses and pressure became an ingredient in the middle-class squeeze” (Phillips, 1993, p.53).
The rising importance of NPOs in U.S. society heightens the need to develop a better understanding of such organizations. Lewis argues that despite there being research on NPOs, little of it has focused on what makes NPOs unique, therefore contributing very little to theory. Despite there being some largely generalizable NPO qualities, they also vary largely in composition and scope, in part due to their abundance (Lewis, 2005, p. 244).

In addition to a lack of NPO-specific theory and NPOs providing diverse sites of study, organizational communication scholars are able to provide a unique perspective suited especially for NPOs. “Complex and, perhaps, unique communication dynamics take place” in the nonprofit world and despite there being research on nonprofits, the uniqueness of nonprofit communication dynamics has been understudied (Kirby & Koschmann, 2012; Lewis, 2005, p. 241). “Simply put, there is no way to fully understand today’s organizational landscape without a thorough understanding of the nonprofit and voluntary sector” (Kirby & Koschmann, 2012, p. 134). Lewis provides four potential starting points for organizational communication scholars to examine NPOs: social capital; mission, effectiveness, and accountability; governance and decision making; and volunteer relationships.

Mission, effectiveness, and accountability are of fundamental importance to this study. Evaluating the success of an NPO mission is generally a difficult feat (Lewis, 2005). Specifically with SEYA, what does it mean to impact youth? Should this be measured by the amount of money poured into a community, the number of hours invested by volunteers, the size of enrollment in the afterschool programs, or even the number of proselytized students? Do clients, funders, and employees all have different ideas of what this mission means? Does an NPO live up to its mission if funders believe it to, yet clients do not?
On top of the complexity of measuring such a thing, mission statements are also constraining to an NPO. NPO executives lack the freedom to abandon their mission in pursuit of a more lucrative ideal. An NPO cannot abandon an afterschool program and start a homeless shelter because there is more funding for such a venture. Lewis states that a “common conclusion in the NPO literature is that mission is at the heart of the organization’s identity and has great implications for managerial behaviors and organizational performance, and perceptions of NPO effectiveness” (2005, p. 251). The evaluation of mission effectiveness is one area in which research has only skimmed the surface resulting in many opportunities to engage in unique dynamics only observable within the NPO context (Lewis, 2005).

With an ever increasing number of NPOs in the current environment, competition for funding and with for-profit organizations increases between organizations seeking to accomplish similar missions (Dees & Anderson, 2003). As NPO managers are increasingly under this pressure, “mission drift” is more likely, whereby an organization changes its services because it is more financially viable to serve one community over another, (Dees & Anderson, 2003; Lewis, 2005). But as NPOs begin to compete, businesses are challenged to integrate structures, which can lead to the abandonment, or at least modification of, their social missions (Dees & Anderson, 2003).

This concept relates directly to SEYA’s current transition. As they begin to shift their funding and move away from resources drawn primarily from grants, there is a chance the new program will distract them from their mission. How will the possibility of creating a new mission shape other programs that SEYA offers? Organizational communication scholars should study nonprofits not only because a communicative approach to nonprofits is underdeveloped, but it is “the area where we are poised to have substantial impact” (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 140, italics
A large amount of nonprofit literature has been done through the lens of economic theorizing, arguing that NPOs exist in responses to failures in the market (Koschmann, 2012). While this work has proved beneficial in studying NPOs, it only provides one dimension of the issue. These theories fall short by minimizing the complexities of social interaction limiting it to the acquisition and consumption of goods. Additionally, economic theories assume nonprofits exist because of market failures with the underlying assumption that “nonprofits would be unnecessary if the market and state were ‘perfect’” (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 140). Finally, the lived experiences of nonprofits have been neglected thereby failing to do an adequate job of explaining the organizing processes (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 141; Koschmann, 2012b; Putnam, L. L., Nicotera, A. M., & McPhee, R. D., 2009).

Koschmann suggests three focuses as necessary for a communicative theory of the nonprofit: lived experience; analyzing unique language and discourse; and the constitution of NPOs through the communication process (2012a, p. 141; Kirby & Koschmann, 2012). A lived experience focus in studying nonprofits allows a deeper, truer-to-life understanding. In everyday experience nonprofits are not thought of simply in terms of their tax exemption status, but also as entities constructed through the social interaction with relevant stakeholders. This phenomenological approach of studying the experience allows us to understand a nonprofit as “a socially constructed concept that is reinforced (or not) through continued patterns of communication” (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 141).

Additionally understanding nonprofit ethos is crucial. Each nonprofit often has a particular way of working that adds to its “nonprofit-ness” (Koschmann, 2012a; Lewis, 2005). A communication perspective allows us to understand these qualities as constitutive of communication, created and brought to life through communication patterns and interactions:
“Therefore, communicative theories of the nonprofit should seek to understand, explain, and
direct our attention toward the ways in which existential qualities are constructed and how lived
experiences influence a host of relevant social outcomes” (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 142).

Language and discourse become incredibly important in developing and understanding a
communicative theory of nonprofits. Communication as constitutive, as not only describing but
also producing meaning, is essential to both nonprofit and overall organization theory
(Brummans, Cooren, Robichaud, & Taylor, 2014). Examining terms unique or frequently
employed by nonprofits, such as mission, core values, volunteer, and serving, allow us to analyze
the “social realities that enable and restrict organizational activity” (Koschmann, 2012a, p. 143).
These concepts are part and parcel of SEYA and its mission. Organizational communication
theory, thus seems an appropriate starting point for this particular exploratory case study.

Literature Review

**Communicative Constitution of Organizations.**

This section examines and presents applicable organizational communication literature,
in addition to literature related to the work discussed above. This will expand how
communicative constitution of organization literature is vital to the understanding of any
organization from a communication perspective, and also present a framework for considering
the case of the SEYA within communicative construction theory. Pivotal to this theory is the
understanding that organizations need to be conceived as a system of complex social interactions
of coordination and control that come into existence through communicative action.

Communicative constitution of organizations (CCO) is not unique to nonprofits; however, it is
*crucial* to any theory of organizational communication. CCO holds that communication is the
means by and through which organizations are created and exist. In the present case, I will be searching for direct links between CCO and activities and issues that exist within SEYA.

Three distinct lines of research have emerged under the title of CCO: McPhee’s structurationist approach; distanciation, which explains how separate instances merge into a collective actor of the organization; and presentification, which occurs once the previous translation constitutes the organization as an actor of its own. Following is a brief outline of the three, as is appropriate for the scope (or need) of this project.

McPhee’s structurationist approach stems from and serves as an application of structuration theory. Organization occurs through the coproduction of norms or “taken-for-granted routines,” enacted by stakeholders (Brummans, et. al., 2014, p. 174). This model relies on four flows that when combined produce an organization. These four flows are each distinct, yet a single episode can affect multiple flows at once (Putnam, et al., 2009). While they are deeply related they are also separate, as each constitutes and creates organization.

The first flow, membership negotiation, entails the negotiation of boundaries, especially during the socialization of newcomers. Membership labels are in effect relational identifiers that constitute an organization. By their existence they reference the organization even if indirectly (Putnam, et al., 2009). Reflexive self-structuring, the second flow, refers to acts of communication that enable a group of people to organize beyond being just their group. As individuals begin “to represent themselves as (part of) an organization,” those representations assemble the structures of organizing around them (Brummans, et. al., 2014, p. 174).

Thirdly, activity coordination involves members’ learning of and adapting to work processes to integrate their contributions into larger organizational processes. Here the constitutive force lies in the assimilation to norms through communication (Brummans, et al.,
SEYA COMMUNICATIVE IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

2014). The final flow, institutional positioning, deals with the organization’s position within the larger organizational environment. This last flow constitutes the organization’s identity within the local system of organizations.

McPhee (2004, p. 365) strictly defines texts as “a relatively permanently inscribed symbolic formulation” (as cited in Brummans et al., 2014 p 175). This is problematic for the present study of SEYA, as it excludes everyday activities and embodied performance. It also supports a static conception of identity that is problematic. While identity has been conceived as a fixed entity, recent research has highlighted the need for a fluid and multifaceted conception of identity (Cheney, et al., 2014).

The Montreal School researchers believe that McPhee’s model “does not provide a precise enough theory of how organization emerges in communication” (Brummans, et al., 2014, p. 176). Rather than using four flows, this perspective chooses to use four dynamic translations. These translations consist of more than just a change in position; each “implies transformation both in medium and in form, one that becomes a new lexicon” (Brummans, et al., 2014, p. 176). Implementing translation highlights the piecing together of individual events to compose the larger whole of an organization, whereas flows work with the whole of the organization informing smaller instances.

The first translation, organization as a network of practices and conversations, refers to the transactional nature of organizational relationships. In order for a group to accomplish a shared task they must enter an agreement, a social contract, whereby each party contributes through complementary practices. Important to this translation is that each human agent brings a worldview to a situation whereby each individual sees and contributes to a situation differently. The organization then emerges from these transactional relationships (Cooren & Taylor, 1997).
The second translation involves mapping collective experience through distanciation, which explains how separate instances are mapped together into the collective actor of the organization. This is achieved in two steps of communication about communication. The first posits each situated practice within the larger organization mosaic. The second is a reading of that mosaic translated into a narrative expressed as the organizations point of view (Brummans, et al., 2014). How do individual pieces fit together to create a cohesive whole, resulting in more than just a sum of its pieces parts?

Organization as authoring through textualization is the third translation and highlights “how an organization comes to be authored or turned into a text” (Brummans, et al., 2014, p. 179 italics original). Here another phase of distanciation occurs whereby the lived practices are made generalizable, where manuals and procedures are made standard for a variety of situations. This leads to organizing being less grounded in the day-to-day practice of giving power to texts as unifying mechanisms. Organizations then exist as separate entities from the individual while still subsuming the organized.

Lastly, organization as representation and presentification occurs once the previous translation constitutes the organization as an actor of its own. Here the organization as an actor is able to represent the organized and make its presence known to those within and outside of the organization. There are those who are authorized to speak on behalf of and for the organization as a whole. In doing this the organization gains agency as an actor among other selves in the macro context of other organized selfs.

CCO will be helpful in looking at SEYA as it provides the framework through which organizational identity will be understood. Explicit and implicit communication will be taken into account in constructing and understanding SEYA’s identity. CCO allows us to understand
both the lived experience of SEYA and explicit communication as co-constructing their organization.

Although this notion of CCO does provide a conception of the fluid dynamics of identity, it may not be the best model for studying NPOs. NPOs, especially smaller firms that exist only on the local level, may never reach a formal level of procedures and textualization. When an NPO has only two employees its textualization becomes much looser than a larger organization demanding fixed procedures. The NPO is unique in its ability to stay grounded in its daily practices. This lack of rigid procedure allows a flexibility in practice not available to larger organizations; however, this flexibility becomes problematic in the last translation above. Representation and presentification become convoluted practices that change as NPOs develop. This is one of the many communication issues that make NPOs a unique site of study for organizational communication scholars.

The third system of CCO, the Luhmannian systems approach, is summarized only briefly. Luhmann conceives of systems as self-referential, as they actively create an identity of themselves separate from their environment through observing themselves. This autopoiesis is counterintuitive in “that although these systems need the resources of the environment to exist and function, the operations that define how they are organized and bounded are not determined by the environment, but by the system itself” (Brummans et al., 2014, p. 184). Luhmann emphasizes the necessity of communication to organizing and proposes a three-part system. “Communication (1) selects something from its environment (while leaving other things aside), (2) selects what is going to be said about it (triggering questions of sincerity), and (3) selects how what is said is going to be understood” (Brummans et al., 2014, p. 185). Communication is the means by and through which organizations are created and exist. In the case of the SEYA study,
I will be looking for examples of statements originating in its environment, how they are understood, or not, and trying to analyze their role in defining and cohering the organization in its activities day-to-day and overall.

**Linguistic Turn and Critical Theory.**

Understanding the centrality of communication in organizing is fundamental to SEYA’s afterschool transition. What they communicate will determine not only how and who will organize, but it is itself the organizations. This “shift” in communication status and function suggests what has been called the “linguistic turn.” Mumby argues that the linguistic turn has repositioned communication from its place on the periphery as an aspect of organization to the very thing that constitutes organizing (2014). The linguistic turn has resulted in moving Critical Organizational Communication Scholarship toward acting as a catalyst for change by transforming “social, political and economic structures which limit human potential (L’Etang, 2005, p. 521). Three phenomena have emerged within Organizational Communication as a result of this turn: 1) communication has been positioned as constituting organizations instead of simply being one of the many peripheral effects; 2) with the importance placed on communication, it has, as a field, been placed at the center of diverse interdisciplinary organization research; and 3) the emergence and ubiquity of post-Fordist, non-traditional, forms of organizations lend themselves to communicative explanation.

Critical theory runs into trouble when one dominant force replaces another, but with the linguistic turn this does not happen. While this turn may be rooted in the thoughts of a specific intellectual tradition, it opens up the possibility for diverse ways of knowing. The linguistic turn in critical theory has thus shifted language from a representational to a constitutive view, and for Mumby the importance of this is its dealing with “the hegemony of Cartesian dualist forms of
thinking in the humanities and social sciences” (2014, p. 103). This is key, because it dethrones hegemonic ways of thinking and introduces multiple ways of knowing. With Cartesian thought, knowledge was attainable through a “subject who knows and an object to be known/discovered” (Mumby, 2014, p. 104). With this critical turn reality was not a thing to be symbolized through language; language was the reality, thus leading to the “crisis of representation” (Mumby, 2014, p. 104). With the inability of language to fully describe reality, an overall shift of orientation in scholarship had to occur. Mumby asserts that this shift occurred in five areas in organizational communication: 1) the status of knowledge claims, 2) the status of theory and theory development, 3) the role of the researcher and representational practices, 4) power and politics, and 5) identity and difference. (2014, p. 104). The present case is best informed by the last three—role of researcher, power/politics, and identify/difference.

These diverse ways of blending critical thinking demonstrate the breadth of scholarship brought about by the linguistic turn. Fundamental to all of these perspectives is its distinction from administrative research. Its goal is not simply to predict, to find effects, to gather data, but rather it does these things with the goal of bringing practical change. This is particularly important to an organization with scarce resources in a complex context, such as most NPOs. Critical research views the status quo as fundamentally inadequate; therefore, describing reality is never enough. This study seeks to employ this critical frame to not only illuminate a phenomenon, but also to conduct research that clearly addresses a problem. This lens orients this study to examine underlying and hidden politics behind the shift in SEYA’s afterschool program. Bringing hidden motives to light will allow SEYA to respond directly to the forces surrounding this transition.
Looking to the future, Mumby asks, “given that critical research is, in part, defined through its challenges to the dominant orthodoxy, what challenges exist if it is not to become part of that orthodoxy?” (2014, p. 117) In order for critical organizational research to eschew becoming the dominant orthodoxy, it must continue to push the boundaries, and expand and challenge current ways of knowing. Mumby suggests including the perspectives of different scholars that have remained on the periphery. His second answer to this question draws on Marxist notions of re-balancing the importance of symbolic and material in the organization process. This idea of re-balancing may be examined by comparing the communicated purpose behind SEYA programming to the actual lived experience. Questions about gaps between communication and lived experience are important to bringing this theory into grounded practice. Ultimately he ends by pushing forward the idea that critical organizational communication scholarship needs to continue to ask questions about the meaning of work in our lives.

The current SEYA situation presents both planned and unplanned change. Lewis et al., examine the difficulties faced by NPOs in times of planned organizational change (2001). They define planned organizational change as resulting from “the purposeful efforts of organizational members as opposed to change that is due to environmental or uncontrollable forces” (Lewis et al., 2001, p. 9). The unplanned change comes from the change in the grant-providing NPO modifying the terms and restrictions of the grant. While understanding this aspect of the situation is important, it is the reaction of SEYA—the planned change—that will be examined.

Planned change presents NPOs with unique problems as they have to negotiate relationships with organizational stakeholders, such as board members, clients, and donors. Lewis, et al., highlight several gaps within the communication literature on planned change
First it fails to document the diversity of communicative approaches adopted by implementers. Second, the entire process has been flattened and simplified by ignoring the different constituencies involved in planned change. Third, “little is known about the thoughtfulness with which implementers approach communication about change in terms of the rationales they have for the actions they take” (Lewis, et al., 2001, p. 13). Their study examined the approaches used in communication about change to stakeholders of NPOs. They constructed six models that reflect implementers’ strategies to change communication with which they were able to theorize “about the contingencies that predict the communication approaches implementers will use during the installation of change initiatives in their organizations” (Lewis, et al., 2001, p. 14). Twenty-six implementers in influential positions within various types of NPOs participated in interviews about the approaches they adopted in communicating change to key stakeholders. They were asked a variety of questions causing them to reflect on approaches they previously utilized for communicating change.

The data collected during the interviews produced six models. Equal dissemination included communicating information to every type of stakeholder “early, often, and most important, equally” (Lewis, et al., 2001, p. 18). Equal participation differed from equal dissemination in that it invited two-way communication. Quid pro quo approaches shared information with stakeholders who were able to offer something of value or had positions of internal influence. Need-to-know is another selective dissemination approach that shares information with only those who either ask or are informed by necessity. Marketing focuses on approaches that craft specific messages targeted at different groups or individuals. Reactionary approaches were the least common, or the least commonly reported, and took the form of crisis communication resulting from the need to manage problematic change (Lewis, et al., 2001).
Additionally Lewis, et al., provided predictions for types of communication implemented by organizations depending on their need for communication efficiency and consensus building (2001, p. 29). This theoretical model will advance this study to further describe SEYA’s organizational culture. These models will also prove helpful in examining the communication strategy utilized by SEYA during their planned transition period. The time frame of the study provides a unique perspective on the communication of planned change. Instead of looking at communication through the memory of NPO management, this study will allow a look at real time communication negotiation.

These six categories provide a strong framework for examining and understanding SEYA’s communication during this period. Getting a grasp on how this is done is critical as it begins answering some of the questions asked of the study. Because the manner in which SEYA communicates also constitutes its organization, this will shed light on its larger identity. Therefore examining whether SEYA philosophy and ideology align with communication is central to the study. If dissonance is found between communication and SEYAs mission statement, SEYA may be able to use this information to adjust their communication during future change.

**Organizational Identity.**

While identity can be understood as the stable center of an organization that can be discovered through examining its discourse (Cheney et al., 2014, p. 697), this study sees identity as inseparable from relationship. It is through relationship to something else that identity can manifest and be conceptualized. This operates on the assumption that as long as there is existence, there is identity. Existence functions as the most basic form of identity and can be
understood as a relationship with that which does not exist. A NPO exists through its interactions with others.

Historically the “container” metaphor has been used in understanding organizational communication (Cheney et al., 2014). This centers discourses of organizational identity on the communication within an organization. This study seeks to embrace the somewhat recent shift in perspective as demonstrated by Taylor and Van Every (Cheney et al., 2014). The paradigm they use is one in which communication and organizing are one in the same. This breaks down traditional boundaries of organizational life and fits within the understanding of communication as a constitutive force (Brummans, et al., 2014).

As Cheney et al., (2014) note, the ontological status of an organization is not a static entity but one of dynamic composition. However, NPOs provide a unique opportunity to examine this claim. While NPOs do have a dynamic composition, they also maintain core values and a mission statement or vision around which they organize. This tension of core identity versus identity constituted through everyday practice provides a site of exploration. This static yet dynamic identity composition is one of the many ways that NPOs provide a unique site of study for the organization communication scholar. This study, as outlined below, will examine both the core values and mission statement of SEYA as well as its everyday practices that create the organization’s daily life. Comparing the identity created through each will be a large part of the analysis. Chaput, Brummans, and Cooren use this concept of consubstantiality to conceptualize identification as developing through everyday life (2011). It creates organizational identification while simultaneously shaping the organization.

This literature provides a foundation and significance for questions of this study. The question—How is SEYA’s identity communicated/perceived differently to/by its members,
donors, and clients?—must be answered through the framework created through past works, not as a question in isolation, but as an extension of previous work.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

As highlighted in the rationale for this study, analyzing the communicative identity of SEYA is important both to the organization as well as to the existing literature. Examining SEYA through this transition illuminates previous understandings of how NPOs negotiate their identity in times of planned change. It provides an ideal site for this type of study because of how recently it went through its transition, as well as the surrounding climate of Midville. Additionally, SEYA emphasizes the importance of a clearly articulated identity as it is expressed through its mission statement and core values. This time of transition has not only brought a shift in programming, but also changes in how SEYA articulates its mission.

Knowing that SEYA has renegotiated its mission gives the appearance that SEYA embodies a fluid identity as theorized in the CCO literature. However, this needs to be further explored and dissected through closely examining both SEYA’s navigation of this transition as well as how this transition has directly influenced SEYA. How does a change in mission statement correlate to change in the NPO identity? To understand this, examining how SEYA communicates about and in the midst of this transition, both in programs and mission statement, is essential.

Both CCO and the linguistic turn heavily emphasize the importance of communication in organizing. Communication is not just a tool used by organizations to disseminate information, but it is also the means by which organizations organize. If CCO holds that organizations are systems of intertwined social interactions brought into existence through communicative action, how can this be seen in SEYA? Does this hold true for a small scale NPO? An examination then of SEYA’s communication cannot be viewed as separate from an examination of its identity.
If communication is the central phenomena in organizing, as the linguistic turn argues, what does this look like in regards to SEYA? This turn has re-conceptualized communication as an illocutionary act over perlocutionary act in terms of organizing; it is communication itself that acts as an organizer. Before moving to questions tying communication and identity, it is important to look at how the linguistic turn applies to a small NPO like SEYA. One of the questions raised by this study is how does this conceptualization of communication play out in a microcosm like SEYA? Because SEYA is a small localized expression, it eschews many types of organizational regulations and norms that emerge in larger institutions.

The small scale of SEYA may influence the ways in which communication constitutes its organization, and the low number of organizational employees may aid in its ability to rapidly adapt to change. But, while there are few employees, SEYA maintains a high number of community partners, from individuals to large institutions that will be affected by this transition. Gaining an understanding of the larger inter-organizational context will be important to this study. With this in mind questions of nonprofit identity naturally become about communication. Examining SEYA’s identity through this transition then turns to looking at how it has communicated through this transition period.

The literature discussed above has been consulted in order to provide a framework for developing questions. Guiding questions that have emerged are: what is unique about NPO communication? How do mission/objectives inform organizational identity? Does communication by SEYA align with its mission and core values? What does communication tell us about NPO identity? Does communication by SEYA have the same organizing function as that of a larger institution? Because of the nature of the phenomena of interest, SEYAs communication in the midst of transition, questions are informed both by literature and data
collection. The following questions have emerged out of the literature and are the core research questions driving this study:

- **RQ1**: Is the linguistic turn applicable to small non-profit organizations such as SEYA?
- **RQ2**: How do SEYA’s communication patterns impact how successfully they can fulfill their mission?
- **RQ3**: Is there a gap in communication and SEYA’s mission statement and core values? If so, what is at the heart of this issue?

SEYA is a small case with only a few employees in an atypical locale. Because of this it is unlikely that quantitative methods would reveal the kinds of data necessary to address the above questions. The questions this study is trying to answer require gathering data embedded in the context. Data that is thick and localized is desired to address the specific case of SEYA, and quantitative methods would not likely yield the needed results. Therefore, the best approach to address the questions and test the theory and existing literature is qualitative, including several interpersonal, ethnographic, and survey questionnaire methods. Ultimately the approach used examines SEYA as a case study adopting a qualitative lens using mixed methodology.

Data and evidence collection rely primarily on informal and formal interviews, and analysis of flyers, brochures, and other media produced by the organization. Remaining flexible in methodology allows for adaptation of the study as it progresses; as different themes emerged the method was simultaneously adapted to remain effective. While initially a parent survey was designed to gain a better understanding of parental motives for enrolling students in SEYA’s program, it was eventually abandoned after several attempts brought about high nonresponse
error (Appendix A). Grounded theory allowed for data collection to be the first part of the study, with coding and analysis to follow.

The interviews that composed the bulk of collected data were executed with a variety of individuals within and surrounding SEYA. Interviews were conducted with eleven key SEYA stakeholders over the course of two weeks. Participants ranged from SEYA employees to parents with students in the program. SEYA’s executive director, Dan Phillips, participated in two interviews over the two-week period, amounting to several hours of audio recording. Lindsay Murphy, SEYA’s Director of Communications and former site coordinator for City Funding (CF), also participated. Interviews with four parents were conducted, two of which took place over the phone. Four former SEYA employees were interviewed, all of whom currently work for CF. Prior to the afterschool transition, these four worked in the previous iteration of the SEYA program. The final interview was conducted with a community partner who worked with SEYA prior to, during, and after the transition.

For the purpose of providing a varied set of perspectives an interview with CF executive director, Amy Umbridge, or a member of their board was desired. However, because of the tumultuous nature of the situation, revealed after beginning interviews, it was avoided. A request was made to Phillips to allow the interview to happen, but was ultimately denied. The denial was out of a fear of potential legal repercussion, which will be discussed in further detail in chapter four. Because this study seeks to minimize any risks brought about through participation, his denial was heeded and honored.

Interviews were structured by the list of questions below, but conversations developed based on the natural flow of the interview allowing for open responses and phenomena not accounted for in the original questions. Additionally, any questions posed to participants were
made optional, which was explicitly made known verbally and in writing prior to and at the beginning of all interviews.

Audio from interviews was recorded and then transcribed verbatim (Appendix B). While, recording remained optional and was only employed upon the consent of the individual, all participants complied with the request. All interviewees signed an informed consent form (Appendix C). Audio recordings were stored on a password-protected computer along with typed interview notes. The two interviews with parents that took place over the phone were not recorded, but careful notes were taken. Notes from the conversation were mailed to each parent along with an informed consent form. They were asked to provide consent as well as sign off agreeing that what was written in the notes accurately portrayed what they had said (Appendix D). There were no issues in getting either parent to comply with this request.

Although children comprise the main population SEYA serves, they were not asked to participate in the data collection process. Because of their at-risk status these interviews were avoided. Additionally data collected from young elementary age children may not have provided the depth of insight parents were able to provide.

Efforts were made to keep all information confidential. Though research records include some information about individuals, their information was protected by limiting access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. This report employs pseudonyms for all cities, organizations, and individuals’ names. Therefore, any risk or possible discomfort due to participation in this study is expected to be minimal. All of the interviews were conducted in a location of the participants’ choosing or in a suggested neutral location. Several interviews were scheduled, but had to be canceled or rescheduled due to complications that arose in the data gathering process.
The study was submitted to HSRB for expedited review on December 4, 2015. Upon initial review several revisions were requested, pertaining to anonymity, participant recruitment, and clarity of the informed consent form. The application was modified to clarify that survey and interview results remain confidential and that names will not be associated with responses in any reports. Snowball sampling was the chosen method for survey participant recruitment. The informed consent form was modified in order to clarify the procedure section, and additional contact information was added for participants. Revisions were submitted December 22, 2015, and HSRB approval was received on January 8, 2016 (Appendix E).

This study desires to gain a sense of how SEYA’s communication defines the organization, not as a component, but as a key element, as argued by the linguistic turn. Therefore this study is interested in questions about the makeup of the organization and its employees and trying to develop a picture of their interrelationships. Communication is understood as that tie between both individuals and other organizations. This study considers SEYA in light of critical, post-Fordist theory of non-traditional organizations. SEYA embodies post-Fordist ideology in its ethos and organizing, as it promotes the non-fungibility of individuals. Because of this, it is important to grasp the nature of SEYA structure and how they interact with donors and clients. Based on these broad frameworks, an interview schedule and questionnaire were constructed.

Because of the reflexive and developing nature of this study, though questions were created prior to gathering any data, the interview schedule remained flexible in order to adapt to each participant and the development of data. Generally the questions asked varied depending on whether the participant was an organization employee or a recipient of its services. Several interviews were conducted with former employees resulting in questions being used from both
categories. The following questions are not always the exact questions asked to individuals; rather they were used as a guiding tool in constructing interview schedules for each individual. The schedule below represents questions in terms of themes and categories of interest to the study. In addition to listing the categories below, a brief description of why these were chosen as tools for this study is included.

**Interview Schedule for Employees**

**History and Experience with SEYA:** How long have you worked for SEYA? What is your role at SEYA? How do you see your position meeting the goals of SEYA’s mission statement or core values? How does the afterschool program meet SEYA’s goals? How will this transition affect that? How is SEYA funded?

These questions largely serve to measure an employee’s attitude towards SEYA as well as their perceived role in the larger organization. Through the entire data collection process these questions were used to begin interviews, and while they yielded valuable data, they also allowed interviews to start in a non-threatening manner. Although not directly asking about organizational identity, participants are given an opportunity to communicate their perceived level of membership. Knowing how long an employee has worked for SEYA gives insight to how they may conceive of the recent transition. If SEYA history has frequently had such transitions, this recent change may be a common element to organizational life. Allowing participants to speak about their roles and how they fit within larger organizational goals gives participants an opportunity to speak to both how and why SEYA organizes. In communicating their role they are speaking to and creating their place in the organization.

Questions about the afterschool program and whether it meets SEYA goals gives insight into how, or if, the program functions as a natural outflow of SEYA identity. Asking this
question in regards to the transition allows for a comparison to be made between pre and post afterschool program’s alignment with organizational goals. Question about SEYA funding served as a preliminary question to probe the larger question of SEYA’s inter-organizational relationships. Because it is an NPO that relies heavily on its community partners, it is important to know how and why they function.

Organizational Identity: How would you describe SEYA? How do you see SEYA’s mission statement being practiced through the programs it offers? Do you often refer to your mission statement when making decisions about the organization’s programs? Have the values changed during your time here?

These questions remained largely open ended and allowed participants to speak freely about how they perceived SEYA’s identity. They are largely oriented at understanding how mission statement functioned as identity. While CCO argues that identity is a fluid notion that is negotiated through a series of flows, these questions sought to probe whether SEYA functions uniquely because of their mission and core values. Understanding how and if employees see SEYA programs as a direct extension of its mission is critical in understanding its actual identity.

If programs and mission do not align, then mission statement is a poor indicator of identity. If this discrepancy exists, the lived experience and social interaction of the organization speaks more directly to identity than misaligned values. The final two questions in this category seek to engage employees’ thoughts on how stable they see mission and value. They were asked in hopes of getting a better understanding of how and if mission and values functioned as an anchoring point or if they changed and evolved with the organization. As data collection began these questions became significant, as it was revealed that the afterschool program transition brought about program and mission statement changes.
Organizational Communication: What methods/mediums do you use to share information about your SEYA? Do you find those methods effective? With whom is it most difficult to communicate? What is the most difficult aspect of SEYA to communicate?

This category of questions directly addresses the communication patterns of SEYA. As noted in the literature review, a gaping hole in NPO research concerns what makes NPO communication unique. While these questions will not provide generalizable data to the larger NPO context, they will illuminate a corner of a small, localized NPO. These questions also brought to light how SEYA chose to communicate during a time of planned change, which can be situated into the six categories provided by Lewis, et al. (2001).

Additionally because this study is examining communication in light of the linguistic turn, communication speaks volumes about organizational identity. Although these questions do not ask directly about the organization, they give a sketch of how employees are organized and how they interact inter-organizationally. Understanding how they communicate gives another level on which lived social practice can be compared to stated mission and goals. Data gathered from these questions allows for analysis of discrepancy between SEYA ideology and practice. Asking whether communication patterns embody SEYA philosophy is to evaluate dissonance between practice and ideology, thereby directly addressing the third research question.

**Interview Schedule for Non-Employees**

History and Experience with SEYA: How did you hear about SEYA? What programs of SEYA did/do you participate in? What was your experience with previously mentioned programs and why did you choose them? If you are no longer involved in those programs, why? Was it what you expected?
These beginning questions help to familiarize the participant and interviewer. Questions such as the first and second above allowed the interview to begin in a non-threatening manner, while providing valuable information. The first question in this category, though it was an introductory question, gave a large amount of insight into how SEYA communicates with outsiders. This also allowed questions in the organizational communication category below to be modified in order to gain deeper insight.

Beyond serving as an introduction, these questions provided data on why parents chose to enroll their child in SEYA programs. These questions were often followed by asking what makes SEYA unique among other afterschool programs. In talking about the programs they were/are involved in, participants were able to speak about organizational identity without constraining their answers to identity language, providing a more valid measure.

Organizational Identity: How would you describe SEYA? Do you know what SEYA’s mission statement or core values are? (After informing them of SEYA’s mission statement) Do you think the programs offered by SEYA comply with its mission statement? Is it important to you that SEYA’s mission statement and actions align? What would you change about SEYA?

Again questions on organizational identity remained open ended, and the interviewer encouraged participants to speak freely about how they perceive SEYA’s identity. As stated above in the employee’s corresponding section, these questions are largely oriented at understanding how mission statement functions as identity. Asking organizational outsiders these questions gives further insight into how the stability of organizational identity exists. These questions are very similar to those asked to employees. This was done intentionally to help gauge whether there are further discrepancies between mission statement and organizational practice.
Additionally this gives insight into how well SEYA has communicated its mission and purpose behind its programs.

Organizational Communication: How do you stay updated on information about SEYA? Does SEYA do a good job of communicating who they are and what they are doing?

Though this section contains only two listed questions, discussion of SEYA communication often developed far beyond these initial questions. Again these types of questions give insight into the unique nature of NPO communication. SEYA communication patterns largely vary from that of larger NPOs. Gaining insight into non-organizational members’ perceptions of SEYA practices gives insight into their unique communication problems.

In conjunction with data gathered through interviews, rhetorical analysis of external communication and organization documents are employed. While the interviews provide answers to how SEYA members and non-members perceive each identity, documents reveal what is actually being communicated. The texts include, but are not limited to, promotional material gathered online and in person, organization mission statements and core values, material documenting programs and services, and any project proposals or plans. Additionally a short survey was created for parents of students who have been or are currently involved in SEYA’s afterschool program. This survey derived formed from the above questions with the goal of reaching a larger number of parents. The surveys were to be utilized in hopes of gathering broader data that could be used to help inform data gathered from interviews, as well as provide opportunities to potentially engage in in-depth parent interviews.

Originally the survey was designed to be openly distributed to parents, but was unable to happen due to SEYA’s targeted communication strategy. SEYA purposefully did not openly
advertise the genesis of their new program because they wanted to avoid taking students from CF’s program. In order to avoid CF’s accusations that they were poaching kids from their program, they initiated with specific groups of parents. Because of this SEYA asked that the survey only be distributed to the parents who were informed of the new program.

Surveys were given to SEYA to distribute to their approved parents; however, surveys were not sent out within the requested time frame. Though Phillips had said that surveys would not be a problem in preliminary conversation, he later found problems with specific questions in the survey. He found the question, “Has this question benefited your student? If so How?” unanswerable because the new program had been operating for such a short period (Appendix A). Once he provided this feedback, the question was removed and newly formatted surveys were provided to SEYA. Several weeks into data collection the new surveys were sent home with students in the new SEYA program to be given to their parents and returned the following week. Parents were given a week to fill out the questionnaire before the desired completion date of data collection. Ultimately only two surveys were collected, resulting in negligible data. Because of this, results are based solely on data collected through interviews.

In addition to interview data this study also looks at the rhetorical analysis of organizational discourse. The method of this study is not to come in with a particular theory to test, but to gather data and attempt to understand it through theory. The multitude of questions raised by current research and theoretical lenses serve only as a frame out of which to limit and direct the questions asked while observing the phenomenon. Through examining the organizational texts, different questions arose and more vital phenomenon surfaced.
CHAPTER IV. INTERVIEW NARRATIVES: “THE DIVORCE”

The following chapter is the report of the data from the interviews conducted with eleven key SEYA stakeholders. As interviews were conducted it quickly became apparent that this transition was still very fresh in the minds of those involved. Relationships were damaged in the midst of the shift from being embedded in various Midville schools to SEYA providing its own afterschool program independently, and the issues have not been completely resolved. Additionally, interviews with specific individuals were eschewed at the request of SEYA’s executive director in order to avoid potential litigation. The details and rationale behind this decision will be explained through the following account. The report of the interview results begins by drawing together the setting and circumstances of the SEYA afterschool program transition. Excerpts from interviews conducted with a variety of participants provide an intersubjective account of how and why this transition occurred.

SEYA has been working in Southeast Midville since 1996. They have existed to support the youth in the neighborhood in a variety ways. The program of interest for this study is the afterschool program, which provided a safe space, time for tutoring, educational enrichment, and recreation. Initially tutoring was hosted at the SEYA building, but in 2007 they moved into one of the local elementary schools. CF, another local nonprofit that focuses on grant writing, was able to acquire funding for the SEYA afterschool program through the 21st Century program, a federal grant created to fund afterschool initiatives supporting students in low-performing schools in high-poverty areas.

Because SEYA had previously operated an afterschool program, they were able to pair their funds and resources with the grant money. This created a unique program occurring initially in only one of the thirteen elementary schools within the city, driven by SEYA’s core values and
mission. The grant period ran for five years and was not renewed in 2013. That year, SEYA was able to remain in the schools by raising extra funds to pay for the entire program. After one year with no grant funding, CF was able to renew the grant, thereby providing another five years of funding for the program.

Several ways that the SEYA program was unique were in its high staff-to-student ratio, enrichment opportunities, career/occupation awareness, experiential learning, and even in its snack. SEYA was able to provide this experience largely due to its numerous community partners. Many volunteers were university students from two nearby colleges earning internship credit or service learning hours. The high staff-to-student ratio facilitated more focused time with individual students, instead of simply trying to manage the chaos (Appendix B, interview with Vanessa Keith). The importance for creating this focused time with only a few students largely emerged from the success of SEYA’s summer enrichment camp (Phillips interview, line number 390-393; Phillips follow up interview, line number 270-281). The Summer Enrichment camp is a summer long day camp program created at the request of the local school administration to combat summer learning loss. Over the course of the camp, staff members are assigned two to three students to purposefully focus on and spend time with. The goal is to help build staff and student bonds as well as help staff teach to students’ specific learning needs. Because these methods proved successful, SEYA sought to formulate their afterschool program in a similar manner.

Some of the afterschool enrichment opportunities mentioned during the interviews were science experiments, engineering and robotics kits, teachers coming in to talk about nutrition, financing class for personal and small business, vocational awareness, art projects, and hands-on learning through science classes in the garden (Alltop; Boyer; Phillips; Werth). One of the
university football teams volunteered and served as mentors for the boys in the program, often inviting the children to come to their practices and games (Alltop; Plains; Werth). A local food pantry was able to provide substantial meals for the kids beyond the carton of milk and crackers the other programs supplied: “Some days you get macaroni and hot dogs, ya know with hot dogs cut up in it, you might get turkey sandwich, it was nice variety the kids loved it” (Plains, 219-220).

When asked if this holistic approach had made an impact on students academically, the SEYA director said that the students in the program showed 1.3 years of growth according to the i-Ready scores that the principal shared with him (Phillips f/u, 295-301). The principal did not have the numbers to compare to the general student body but said that whenever you can achieve more than a year’s growth that it’s outstanding (Phillips f/u, 295-301)! The SEYA philosophy of youth development is largely rooted in their former mission statement, which is now their slogan. (Mission statement withheld to uphold anonymity)

So when we talk about [our mission statement], it’s about believing that every child is created by God and they’re gifted by God, and so how better to impact a child’s life with the love of Christ than explain how much God loves them and how he gifted them. (Phillips, 429-432)

“The enrichment programs in our afterschool program,” Phillips explained, “help a child unpack their giftedness. And so we’ve started using that terminology when we talk about our programming, even though we didn’t use it in the programming” (Phillips, 238-231). Though this philosophy and language were not used within the afterschool program, they provided a guiding paradigm for the development of their programs. As will be later discussed, these guiding principles did not serve as a means for Christian catechesis, but as rationale for the kinds
of environments and programs SEYA provided. Parents reported in interviews that wanting these Christian values in the program was not necessarily because they were Christian in nature, but instead because of the environment and climate they provided (Alltop; Boyer; Brown; Keith; Ruff; Werth).

SEYA largely developed their programs free from restrictions by either the grant or CF. School principals and teachers welcomed the Christian perspective within the school as long as it meant the creation of a safe environment and the exclusion of any form of proselytizing. The SEYA program expanded into two schools at the beginning of the second five-year grant period; it now serves both Lincoln and Washington Elementary schools in the Southeast. Lincoln elementary, where SEYA had been working, was previously a K-5 school, but with district wide changes taking place, it shifted to only grades 3-5, with the K-2 moving to Washington Elementary down the street. SEYA was already working with the kids being transferred, so the transition ended up being very natural (Phillips f/u, 255-260). The expansion meant hiring more staff for the program and having SEYA’s director of communications, Lindsay Murphy, serve as the Washington site coordinator.

The second round of grant funding is what triggered shifts in the program. The SEYA Director said, “It was at that point that we noticed that either the state or the nonprofit was making decisions that was changing how things were running” (Phillips, 172-173). He noted that when they were initially invited into the schools for the first grant period, all parties involved approved when they said they weren’t going to move into the schools, unless they were able to maintain their program and name.

For the first five years, the first round of the grant that went smooth sailing. Like, there was no conflict, they just gave us a lump sum of about $20,000 a year to
fund and run our program and we added our money to that and it went great.

(Phillips, 161-164)

However, once the second grant period started, the schools then began requesting that additional kids be enrolled in the program, contrasting SEYA’s desire to grow stronger not bigger (Phillips f/u). “It was so troubling for us when we found out that the schools wanted us to double to 100,” Phillips explained, “because you just can’t replicate that [growth], especially when you’re looking at all the volunteers that come in and stuff like that” (Phillips f/u, 298-300). The changes that began taking place during the second round of funding initiated a process that eventually resulted in SEYA withdrawing from the schools and operating their own program from their own facilities.

“The Divorce”

Before the interview process began, preliminary information had been gathered through informal conversations with nonprofit directors concerning different events through the city. These conversations led to the discovery that SEYA had completely withdrawn from the schools and was to begin a new afterschool program January 19, 2016. The fall of 2015 had brought further restrictions on SEYA’s programs resulting in their decision to completely withdraw from the schools, thereby fully cutting them off from 21st Century grant funding, but also lifting restrictions that came with it. The reason why these restrictions were enforced after the grant had been in effect is still unknown, and well as by whom the restrictions were being enforced. What follows outlines the cause and origin of the newly enforced restrictions as perceived from interviews conducted with eleven key community stakeholders.

Entering the third year of the second five-year grant, Amy Umbridge, the executive director of CF, informed Phillips that the site coordinators who had previously been on the
SEYA payroll had to switch to CF’s payroll. Phillips said this was due to changes at the state level, resulting in funds needing to go directly from CF to the employees, instead of through SEYA. This transition occurred during the summer 2015 for site coordinators at both schools. When asked about the transition Phillips said,

But there was never a real clear shift from, this is your program we’re just giving you the funding to run your program to um…to, hey this now has to be our program and, you know, everything you do has to be through us. (Phillips, 174-176)

He went on further to say that, if that would have been communicated, SEYA would have re-evaluated whether they wanted to stay in the schools for another five years. While there was no clear shift in inter-organizational structure, there was a perceived shift that the two organizations were no longer collaborating, and instead were competing for students and resources. While SEYA did not intend to create perceptions of competition, ways that they communicated as well as communication by third parties fueled this perception. In the initial interview with Phillips, he said:

I think that’s where that mix-up came with, ya know? Was this about collaboration or competition? So when people would ask us about funding I would always talk about the grant funding, um…but it was never, I’ll be honest I just didn’t have conversations like, oh this is the program that we run together, because we always hired everybody, we always organized all the enrichment programs, we organized the snacks, we organized the transportation to [SEYA]. There just wasn’t—and all the staff they just, they work for [SEYA]. I mean the school, the school started making announcements like, kids in [SEYA] afterschool
program report to the gym. Because we were the only organization that was ever present. (Phillips, 199-207).

Though SEYA listed CF as a partner, they did not state that they were equal partners in the program in verbal or written announcements or publications. Phillips felt that SEYA did the majority of the ground work for the programs, and CF was just one of their community partners that provided funding. It was the perception of SEYA staff that Umbridge, CF’s executive director, began to feel a growing competition between the two organizations and that SEYA was taking credit for the work she had done. Because SEYA was proactive in establishing community partnerships with other organizations, those organizations began labeling or referring to the program as “the SEYA afterschool program.” Though this communication was not initiated by SEYA, it was not corrected to include the CF name. This afterschool program labeling gained momentum and eventually was out of SEYA’s control, as is often the case with word-of-mouth communication. Problems began occurring when large organizations gave recognition to SEYA with no regard for CF.

The formal communications that began the ultimate process of the two organizations separating began as the third year of the grant began. In the fall of 2015 SEYA was issued a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the director of CF containing twelve items that SEYA was required to comply with in order to continue receiving funds. SEYA disagreed with five of those items and sent a response requesting that the MOU be revised with explanations for each point. The MOU stated things such as: SEYA cannot send home correspondence to parents, cannot put money into the program, cannot let SEYA interns work there, and cannot create partnerships on behalf of the program. Phillips described receiving the MOU:
And so we went through point by point and just said why we want to be able to communicate with parents, why you know, we want to be able to buy the science kits, we want to be able to buy the team building [exercises], we want to pay for the daily incentives, we’ve already paid for art supplies, and why do we want our interns to be there. (Phillips f/u, 174-178) . . . And then partnerships ya know? We’ve had that for so many years, why would you ask us to sacrifice those strong partnerships that we’ve built? And so the response was, first was, I’ll consider revising the MOU, I’ll just need to talk to my board and my lawyer, is what [Umbridge] said. And then, within two hours, I got another email [from Umbridge] saying, I talked to a few of my board members and they said don’t do anything. So you are not a partner in the grant, you are no longer considered a community partner. (Phillips f/u, 179-185)

Because they did not comply, SEYA was no longer to be a part of the program funded through CF. They had the option of continuing to operate within the schools alongside the other program, but decided to completely withdraw from the schools and use the break in relations as an opportunity to restructure large parts of their program. In the midst of this there was uncertainty about the origins of the restrictions, because they began happening part of the way through the second grant period. While Umbridge reported changes coming from state administration, SEYA staff questioned whether this was really the case.

The incremental implementation of restrictions that culminated in the MOU consistently pointed to Umbridge as the source. In interviews multiple participants said that she was upset because she was not getting the credit for the afterschool program. The Director of Communications at SEYA said, “I hate to pinpoint all of this on one event, but I think we
unknowingly did something that really made Amy mad last spring. And I think a lot of it has to
do with this one event” (Murphy, 342-344). Some of SEYA’s biggest strengths, its community
partnerships and interpersonal word-of-mouth communication, seems to have ended up causing
this series of restrictions and ultimate “divorce” between CF and SEYA.

The key event began with Experience Worship Church (EWC), a local church that draws
more than 2,000 Sunday attendees. EWC has been a community partner with SEYA for more
than two years (Murphy; Turner). They began working together after both organizations
volunteered at Lincoln Elementary at the beginning of the school year. EWC was distributing
book bags and school supplies, while SEYA was letting the kids know that the afterschool
program was starting soon (Murphy; Turner). As EWC saw the relationships that SEYA had
established with the students and families in the school, they began to ask questions about their
own approach to giving (Murphy; Turner). EWC’s director of missions began talking with
Murphy and Phillips about what each organization was doing, and began asking where they both
aligned and how they could partner (Murphy; Turner). Eventually their interns began to
volunteer with SEYA’s afterschool program as part of their internship, their staff started
supplying gifts for SEYA’s affordable Christmas, and they raised funds to support SEYA’s
general mission (Boyer; Murphy; Turner).

In the spring of 2015 EWC hosted a large youth conference, and they wanted to highlight
SEYA as a local organization. Because of this, students at the conference heard about everything
SEYA was doing in the Southeast, and they were given an opportunity to make donations. The
following Sunday, without the knowledge of SEYA, EWC promoted SEYA’s afterschool
program during their main Sunday morning church services and gave general attendees the
opportunity to donate. According to Murphy this was problematic because:
City Funding’s executive director attends Experience Worship Church and was in the audience at the time. And [she] immediately had the feeling, oh well what you’re describing, the afterschool program that [SEYA] is putting on, is actually my afterschool program, from my grant, that I wrote. She sent a couple of letters to the staff, or to the leadership at Experience Worship Church and said, Hey I want you to know that the South East Youth Association is actually my program and [SEYA] is, they’re helping run it, they’re a community partner, but these are my programs, this is my thing, and if you’re gonna give money to anybody it should be City Funding’s. She brought up that she had been a member of that church for a really long time, she had tithed to that church for a really long time, so if anybody was receiving support in Southeast Midville it should be her. (Murphy, 394-403)

This letter prompted EWC leadership to seek clarification from SEYA. And they explained:

We are a community partner that for a long time, not on paper, was subcontracted to run these programs. Specifically Lincoln and for one year Washington. So these two programs look incredibly different than any other programs in the district. What we’re able to offer is just completely different. When enrichment in the grants says $4,000 is allocated for that, the [SEYA] can meet it with another $4,000. (Murphy, 406-410)

EWC wanted to continue partnering with SEYA and delayed meeting with Umbridge, which resulted in her becoming more aggressive in her communication (Murphy). EWC representatives eventually told Umbridge that because they were partnering with more than just
SEYA’s afterschool program, they didn’t need to go through CF, and that they had made their final decisions on the matter. From the perspective of SEYA staff this event was the beginning of a series of events that eventually resulted in the previously mentioned MOU later that fall.

Umbridge reacted to this decision by turning to Little City Church, the church SEYA partners with in the Southeast, and requested that they give money to CF. While EWC has a staff of more than 70, Little City Church has three staff members, and at the time the request was made they were “going through a pastoral transition” (Murphy, 422) and had nobody in the youth pastor position. So they were in no position to help with her program when the request was made.

Later Umbridge discovered that several of her board members had attended the SEYA annual fundraising banquet and had contributed money. These board members had been invited by friends of SEYA staff, who were regular donors (Plains). When she found out, she:

Requested that they tell her how much was given, and then sent an email to all of [SEYA’s] board members requesting that they match the gifts that were given, so that her organization would benefit from the relationship as well. (Murphy, 429-431).

As this tension built SEYA continued to run the afterschool program in the schools but began facing restrictions on what they were allowed to do. Progressive restrictions imposed elimination of the snack supplied by a local food pantry, a ban on SEYA taking students to community gardens for enrichment, and not allowing SEYA to create community partnerships within the program. These limitation eventually led to the MOU forcing SEYA to choose between continuing to operate in the schools without being able to do what made their program unique, or withdrawing completely and losing the grant funding.
The program funded by the 21st century grant continues to operate with the staff that SEYA had trained and hired, able to continue because that summer they were moved to the CF payroll. Those staff members that continued to work with CF were offered opportunities with the new SEYA program, but all decided to continue working in the schools. These staff members report they remained because they felt a duty to the students they were servicing over the program they worked for. Further reason for staff motivation will be expanded below. Many of the staff felt the shift had been abrupt and executed in a hurried fashion.

Joanne Boyer, now the site coordinator for the afterschool program at Lincoln Elementary (grades 3-5), originally ran the SEYA program starting the first year they moved into the schools. She also ran the summer enrichment camp and trained the staff and volunteers that worked under her for SEYA. She had been an SEYA employee until 2015, which is when CF transferred her onto their payroll; she was particularly hurt by the transition and the way in which SEYA withdrew their support. In reflecting Boyer said:

Doing things with [SEYA], and everything has been very positive and productive, but kind of when they pulled out they just took everything from the pencils to the music box. You know what I mean? And I kinda felt like, and I told Dan this, I felt like you were just making a total separation (Boyer, 29-32). As a result of [the transition], the kids kind of suffered somewhat and being honest because we don’t have all the things that we did have. So we kinda, like I said the kids are entertaining themselves [instead of being educated through enrichment]. So it was like a disengagement of a marriage, it was almost like a divorce, if that makes any sense? I think that the [SEYA] felt that they should have more say because some of the say was taken [from them]. (Boyer, 36-41)
While neither transition was smooth, Lincoln’s transition was easier than the transition 
out of its sister school, Washington Elementary. The former SEYA staff remained at Lincoln;
that was not the case at Washington. Lindsay Murphy, the former Washington site coordinator,
who also serves as SEYA’s director of communications, decided to quit, her position as site 
coordinator with CF, so she could be a part of the new program that SEYA was to begin in 
January. When Lindsay was asked about the transition out of the school she said:

So leaving Washington was probably one of the hardest, even professional[ly], it 
doesn’t seem like it would be like that big of a deal, but it was. In so many sense. 
We had built really strong relationships with these people, to say that okay we’re 
no longer going to continue programming in this form. I think a lot of people felt 
hurt in the process. Because the transition with City Funding’s bringing in a new 
coordinator and a new staff wasn’t smooth, I think [SEYA] was blamed a lot for 
that. (Murphy, 475-481)

When Murphy left the school, the program stopped temporarily until CF could hire and 
train someone to fill her position. The new site coordinator lasted one day, and then the program 
shut down for about a week and a half before a new coordinator was able to start (Plains; Werth). 
The entire process was tumultuous, as the students had to get used to a new schedule, new staff, 
and overall new climate that came with the shift. Murphy explains:

When I left I had given notes to like, these are the kids you do not yell at, like you 
are angry and you do not yell at these kids, because it will just wound and hurt 
your relationship and you won’t have any relationship with them. They will not 
respond in this way. And I sent that like the second day after I had left or 
something. And those precedents were already happening, and teachers were
having to intervene with kids and the new staff. And it just wasn’t positive or healthy for anyone. (Murphy, 485-490)

When talking about the transition, one of the afterschool program staff at Lincoln remarked:

So then it got so bad, I don’t know what went down, but Amy and them are not allowed to come to Washington school [laughing] no more. Ya know even though they’re paying for the program, they’re not allowed to go there. Her and her second hand lady. (Plains, 358-361)

The reasoning that Amy Umbridge provided to justify the restrictions differs from what SEYA perceived to be the driving force and underlying issue. Following is a discussion of the reasoning given for three of the main restrictions on the afterschool snack, community garden, and community partnerships. It should be noted that the reasons provided come from a SEYA perspective. Views are coming from SEYA current or former employees and those who have worked or still work for CF, as well as several parents. Reasons for this choice will be highlighted following discussion of the restrictions.

As mentioned, the snack that SEYA had for the students at the afterschool program was provided by a local food pantry. This provided students with a much more substantial snack than the milk and crackers that every other program was provided through the grant. In explaining the rationale behind providing the extra snack, Murphy said:

In our minds being able to offer snacks that at least kept [students] full until 5:30 when they were getting picked up by their families, would at least keep them not focusing on the fact that they’re hungry and they could focus on the fact that, hey I really want to master my times tables, or I really want to master this during academics, or be present during yoga, or whatever they were doing in the program
that day. And if you’re dealing with hungry kids it just doesn’t happen as well, they get cranky and are frustrated, which is anybody. (Murphy, 201-206)

Being able to do this was especially important in the Southeast, the section of the city with the highest concentration of families living below the poverty line where hunger is a large issue. Although SEYA had been running the snack in the program this way for the first grant period and part of the second grant, CF informed them they would have to stop due to standardization policies within the grant. SEYA and the program staff were told that in order to receive funding, all snacks provided through the district had to be standardized. Two CF employees who previously worked for SEYA criticized the restriction on snacks. Sam Plains said:

She’s talking ‘bout well cuz we gotta standardize it, why should Lincoln be getting all of this good stuff and all these other schools aren’t getting it? Well we been doing it for five years. I mean it was in the grant before, so why’s it changing now? (Plains, 222-225).

Mariah Alltop stated:

In my opinion [it] was a really stupid thing to do because [the food pantry] was just giving us extra food and we were helping these kids take home extra food, and sometimes it wasn’t even for them, it was for their little brothers and stuff like that. And then it got cut and I don’t know it just—that was like the hardest part to see, like why would you take food away from kids when you could have the option of like stepping up your other programs to make sure that these other kids are getting just as much as the other program. And then we still have kids that like at the end of the day, take home all the extra milk, like shove their book bags full
and stuff and it’s just, frustrating to see when you know that there’s that need and somebody just was like whatever, I don’t want that. (Alltop, 128-138)

While this may have been a concern of compliance with the grants policies, SEYA staff questioned it because it was being enforced part of the way through the grant disbursement period. Though SEYA questioned the validity of the change, they ultimately complied with the restriction.

Taking students to a community garden was another key component of the program that SEYA had to cut. A few times a week, students at Washington Elementary would walk to a community garden across the street from the school and have science lessons, as well as help with tending the garden. A local community member who served as the head gardener was hired by SEYA to teach kids about gardening, how to work with seedlings, and even plant their own vegetables to eventually take home. Murphy, who during the transition served as both director of communications at SEYA and Washington site coordinator for CF said, “It was just giving the hands on approach that we had wanted, and the idea when it was run past City Funding, seemed like everybody was on board about it” (Murphy, 216-217):

The principal was on board, loved it, loved that the kids were literally coming home with grocery bags full of vegetables and were taking it home to their families and showing up to their moms and dads and you’d hear them scream, I’ve got Sunday dinner. They were so pumped. Our parents were talking about cooking up the vegetables, and our parents were even posting on Facebook, we love the afterschool program, it’s so cool that my kids were, got all these vegetables today in the garden. (Murphy, 231-236)
Though everyone seemed to be in support of the program, CF issued a cease and desist, unless they took the kids to the CF community garden. One of the CF employees in the Lincoln afterschool program commented on this restriction saying:

It’s so bad. At the Washington place, Murphy was running Washington, she was site coordinator. She just wanted to take the kids to this garden that’s right across the street. [Umbridge] told her she couldn’t take the kids to the garden because the soil wasn’t inspected or something or some kind of funny. So I said, for real? I said dirt is dirt. (Plains, 349-352)

The garden they had been using was less than a block away, providing a convenient location within a short walk for students, but the CF location was over a mile and half away. SEYA felt this option was not viable because of the distance they would have to move kindergarteners and the time required to do so. Upon receiving the cease and desist, the SEYA director informed CF of their concern over the distance, and said they were going to continue using the more local option.

Though Murphy was told by Umbridge that they were not allowed to take the students out of the school building, she was told by the principals to keep going to the garden. Because the principals oversaw what happened in the building and all programming went through them, she continued taking the students to the garden for about a week. Umbridge then issued Murphy a warning, letting her know that if she did not listen to her instructions there would be consequences for her actions. She responded to Umbridge saying:

There needs to be a conversation between you and the principal because, your views on running this program are very different and its conflicting in the sense of, I’m being told one thing by you, and I’m being told one thing by the principal
who says that she has approval through Allea Stone who’s over all of afterschool programming in the district. Because there’s these mixed messages I feel like if everybody got on the same page it would be really helpful. So then when she got my email she’s like, okay okay, well since you were getting mixed voices on this there won’t be any consequences for your behavior this time, but know that if you disagree with me, then there will be in the future. (Murphy, 246-254)

As stated before SEYA employees receiving grant money for the afterschool program had to be transferred onto CF payroll. Murphy remarked, “And it got communicated to Dan that essentially the real reason for this was that she wanted to make sure that Joanne and I knew that we were her employees and not Dan’s” (Murphy, 254-260).

The garden incident at Washington Elementary impacted the transition much more than at Lincoln Elementary (Alltop; Boyer; Keith; Murphy; Phillips; Plains; Werth). Reflecting on the transition, Murphy said, “I think the really hard part is, like, if I would have known [it would have happened like that] starting the year, then I would not have gone back to [the school] doing programming” (Murphy, 260-262).

The third major restriction placed on SEYA was on community partnerships. This restriction would have almost completely ended SEYA’s ability to sustain their program. Partnering is a core value of SEYA philosophy, whether that is partnering with children to help them unlock their unique gifts and talents (Murphy), or partnering with other organizations within the community. As noted above SEYA collaborates with community organizations, for-profits, non-profits, local churches and universities to have volunteers, interns, and even financial support for their programs. In their annual report, it says that SEYA “is committed to developing mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations who desire to invest in our mission
financially, with donations of materials, providing services or volunteers” (reference withheld to uphold anonymity). These partnerships have allowed SEYA to remain a small organization that leaves a huge impact. By leveraging resources within the larger community and focusing them on the Southeast real change has happened.

The MOU issued to SEYA required the cessation of all community partnerships, thereby severely impairing SEYA’s ability to operate in the schools. Phillips said:

Once we had the MOU, and we knew that our ability to sort of be present was gonna be drastically reduced, if not, and I don’t want to say eliminated, but ya know. Our role in the afterschool program was going to be reduced greatly. Maybe down to about 10% of what we were, so it was just like once we realized that, we submitted a counter proposal and just said, hey please let us invest in the afterschool program in this way, and they said, no. (Phillips, 143-148)

Because SEYA did not wish to be hindered in such a drastic way, they decided the best option was withdrawing from the school building. They did this with hopes of revising their program and operating out of their own building. This would hopefully allow them to continue community partnerships, keep the number of students where they desire, use their garden, their building, and leave them free to incorporate Christian education.

The kids love our garden, and the kids love coming to the building. And we have this developing language of communicating… [that] God’s creating them as gifts to the world that we can’t really use if we’re in the schools. So if we come to our building, all three of those things are taken care of. (Phillips f/u, 192-195)

Once these restrictions were formally set in place by the MOU, SEYA tried to transition out of the school buildings as smoothly as possible, but in some cases the results were abrupt. It
should be noted that the restrictions discussed above have been reported largely from perspectives favoring SEYA. For the purpose of providing a more varied set of perspectives within this study, an interview with the director of CF, or a member of their board was desired. However, the director of SEYA was afraid of the repercussions involving an interview of this nature.

Amy has threatened litigation against some of the other nonprofits that she’s had trouble with because she felt like they were defaming her, and so I’m just like, I just don’t, I’m a little bit worried about some of these interviews. Especially with people who don’t know us very well. Getting wind back to her, that if she catches wind that we’re gathering information, I’m a little leery of… that she’ll think it’s something bad (Phillips, 555-559).

Though all interviews remain confidential, and names of individuals, organizations, and cities have been changed, the SEYA director thought it best to avoid walking into a potentially complicated situation. While this interview was desired, this study is committed to not bring any harm to any parties involved. With this in mind, a request was made to SEYA to allow an interview to be conducted with CF director for the sake of providing a broader range of perspectives on this transition (Appendix F). The request was denied, because SEYA did not want CF to perceive that SEYA was gathering information for legal actions.

Phillips’s grounds for believing that Umbridge would react by filing litigation was based on her having done so against previous nonprofit partners. Additionally, Phillips recently had a former CF employee call him and ask if SEYA wanted to join in litigation against CF. After declining the former employee’s request, Phillips has tried to distance himself from the situation (Phillips). Reflecting on this instance Phillips said:
It’s like, yeah we’re angry at each other, but like I understand why Amy is, and I understand why I am, and we’re just trying to work this out, separate as peacefully as possible. I said, I don’t want to have any part. [She said] well, would you be a character witness? Would you speak against her character? Like I do not want to be a part of anything like this. And I really wouldn’t have much to say. Ya know? Amy’s always treated us fairly and given us the money, like if we had receipts due and all that kind of stuff, like that’s never been a problem. Even when like the federal money, like the pull down of money didn’t come in time, ya know, Amy would always talk to us and say, look the pull down isn’t here I don’t have the money to pay you, you’re gonna have to wait. And we’re like, hey that’s fine. But yeah. Other people have had huge problems. And we’ve had a huge problem with this whole transition, but I think a lot of it’s misunderstanding and a lot of it is, ya know, sort of this was our program and then they wanted to reclaim it, or claim it. So anyway, not interested in getting into a lawsuit. (Phillips, 543-554)

While SEYA and CF were able to partner together and create an impactful program, miscommunication led to hurt feelings. As a result of the two organizations separating, children, employees, and volunteers suffered. Largely this process was initiated because of a breakdown in communication which led to hurt feelings.
CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Chapter four has provided an in-depth picture of the organizational communication intertwined with SEYA’s transition as understood from the perspectives of the eleven individuals interviewed. This was done with the goal of providing a context for the analysis of this study’s research questions. Following, the questions posed in chapter three will be answered based on interviews and other collected data.

RQ1: Is the linguistic turn applicable to small non-profit organizations such as SEYA?
RQ2: How do SEYA’s communication patterns impact how successfully they can fulfill their mission?
RQ3: Is there a gap in communication and SEYA’s mission statement and core values? If so, what is at the heart of this issue?

Research Question 1

Can SEYA’s case be understood in terms of communicative organizing in light of the linguistic turn?

This question focuses on communication as the driving force in organizing. While the constitutive nature of communication in organizing has been widely demonstrated in large institutional contexts, SEYA provides a unique case for examination. As will be shown below, communication functions as an intrinsic organizing force for SEYA. It is not just a peripheral element of organizing, but the core component to organizational structure.

Here McPhee’s structurationist approach to CCO (communicative constitution of organizations) will be used as a framework for understanding how communication has determined not only how SEYA has organized but how communication itself defines the organization. This framework will allow an analysis of how SEYA can be understood in light of
the linguistic turn. It was acknowledged in the literature review that McPhee (2004, p. 365) strictly defines texts as “a relatively permanently inscribed symbolic formulation” (as cited in Brummans et al., 2014 p. 175). This conception is problematic as it excludes everyday activities and embodied performances, a crucial element of SEYA’s organizing. Because the present study functions with a fluid conception of identity, this will be brought into McPhee’s structurationist framework.

While there are four distinct flows to this theory, often the boundaries between each are blurred. These flows will be used to describe the organizing process and ethos of SEYA as perceived through interviews. One of the most consistent ways interviewees spoke about their relationship to, and the overall organization of, the SEYA was as a family. Beyond just embodied practice, this concept of family is reinforced largely by the SEYA’s emphasis on interpersonal communication. It is through the four flows that this family construct will be analyzed.

The first flow, membership negotiation, is a largely informal process within SEYA. Sam Plains, one of the employees hired by SEYA and who has subsequently remained with the CF program through the transition, shared how he met Phillips and originally came to work for SEYA. “So I live in the neighborhood, and I met [Phillips] through just casually seeing him in the neighborhood and talking and stuff” (Plains, 23-25). It was through casual conversation as neighbors that Phillips first discussed a possible job with Plains. This story was not atypical in how individuals became involved with SEYA. Many employees began as volunteers who spent more and more time with organization, and eventually became paid staff in the program (Alltop, Werth). Once membership becomes formalized, the familial nature of the organization doesn’t
seem to change. When asked to describe his relationship with SEYA, Plains said it is a lot like family as you get to know them through the neighborhood.

> Ya know, you work for them, but it’s more like family. Like friends and stuff. I know he’s my boss, but I don’t see him as a boss, he’s more like a friend. I just go to talk to him or speak to him, he be like, hey come on over to the house, ya know, we’re grilling out in the back yard come over here, ya know? (Plains, 53-56)

The concept of family extends beyond strict organizational lines into the entire southeast neighborhood. The collective “we” was often used by SEYA employees in referring to the larger organization and at times the southeast neighborhood. One thing that was noted in several interviews with former SEYA employees was how the collective “we” was used referring to SEYA prior to and post transition. Largely when talking about the past and their role with SEYA before the divorce, they used “we” to refer to SEYA. However, when talking about SEYA’s new program they separated themselves from the organization (Alltop; Werth).

The family ethos of SEYA aligns directly with its mission statement and core values, and has largely been achieved through its social interaction in the neighborhood as well as careful communication strategies. This will be discussed further when addressing research question three.

The second flow can be seen in how SEYA exists as more than just a group of people; it is a system of individuals organized around a collective goal. Reflexive self-structuring is the second flow, referring to acts of communication that allow a collection of people to organize beyond just one group. The use of job titles creates organizational structures that do not exist in a group that is simply a collection of individuals. Job titles create roles and expectations for group
members towards a common goal. These job titles have the most direct impact in structuring the afterschool program, where organizational structure can most clearly be seen. Within the program SEYA hopes to provide a consistent and structured environment for students, and in order to do this everyone must be aware of who the enrichment tutors are, who will be teaching specific classes, and who will serve as a site coordinator.

While titles are not referred to in day-to-day interactions, using a prefix with a name is commonly used to communicate respect and authority. Even among employees who have the same position in the organization Mr., Ms., or Mrs. are commonly used to communicate someone in authority. Even as individuals refer to themselves using a prefix they are communicating their membership within the organization. This is largely present in younger staff members. Primarily individuals would be referred to as Ms. or Mr. in the context of the afterschool program, but would not use such labels during interviews or away from the school.

Finally the utilization and emphasis of the organization’s mission statement and values provides a goal around which individuals can organize. Though not part of daily social interactions, SEYA regularly discusses their mission in relation to their embodied practice. Its mission gives a purpose and reason to the ways members interact with each other and with those in the neighborhood. SEYA often explains the reason behind their program development by pointing back to their mission statement and core values. Phillips did this recently as he sat down with parents and explained the new afterschool program as a natural outgrowth of SEYA’s mission and core values. While a reason may not be given for every action, SEYA hopes to embody its mission in every action or program.

Their slogan can be viewed as largely positive and oriented at impacting individuals for their betterment; it can also be viewed as exclusionary concerning organizational membership.
Because the slogan speaks about impacting the youth within the neighborhood, the youth become those who are acted upon. While they may be involved and included in the organization, even considered members, they are the individuals being affected. This slogan must be looked at within the larger context of SEYA values. The expanded mission statement, developed during the transition, outlines how impacting means to walk alongside clients, rather than a top-down, authoritarian approach. This will be further unpacked while answering research question three.

In the third flow, the constitutive force lies in the assimilation to norms through communication (Brummans, et al., 2014). Within this flow members learn to integrate their individual roles into the larger organizational structure and mission. The clearest example of SEYA doing this is through its interpersonal communication with individual employees. SEYA’s main mode of communication is interpersonal communication. This can be seen in the implementation of a support group for tutors in the afterschool program. One of the former SEYA employees said:

[Phillips] formed [an SEYA] life group so like even if we didn’t see him [at the school], we had time to go and just talk about the program, like things that we could fix and he’d give us like tactical things. And it made it relational not only like us talking to Joanne about it, but then just getting that outside perspective of like these are the why, this is the reason why kids are acting that way, cuz the program looks this way. So it was really nice. (Alltop, 184-189)

This life group provided an opportunity for employees to process what had been happening during the afterschool program. SEYA’s religious affiliation also emphasized non-violence and affirmation in dealing with students. Though employees may want to respond in
anger or frustration to students, SEYA makes a point to continue acting towards students with love.

The fourth flow, institutional positioning, pertains to SEYA’s position within the larger organizational environment. This flow is directly related to the transition, and the mis-navigation of this flow led to restrictions being placed on the SEYA afterschool program. SEYA chooses to utilize interpersonal communication as its primary mode of communication, whether that is intra-organizationally, to volunteers, to parents using their services, or to other organizations. They rely primarily on word of mouth as a means of advertising and recruitment. This method provides high amounts of control in the messages SEYA is able to communicate, allowing them to modify their message for each individual. While word of mouth allows for this type of control, it does not allow for control of secondary messages broadcast beyond their immediate reach. While this weakness is true of most communication strategies, SEYA’s lack of a comprehensive secondary method of communication does not provide a reference point to reduce or close gaps in communication. As secondary senders broadcast about SEYA, there are few reference materials to verify message accuracy. Normally this approach works well for SEYA, as they have built a large number of community partners through cultivating personal relationships. However, uncontrolled communication led to the CF director enforcing restrictions on the program.

SEYA primarily communicated that CF was one of many community partners, who uniquely provided grant money for the afterschool program. Within the SEYA annual report, CF is designated as a financially contributing partner along with a number of other organizations. Because of this the afterschool program came to be known as belonging to SEYA, as they were the ones developing programs and staff to work with students. While SEYA conceived of CF as
having this limited role, based on Umbridge’s reaction to hearing this perspective being disseminated in the community it is clear she had very different views. After hearing the program talked about in her church as belonging to SEYA, Murphy reported Umbridge wrote letters to the church saying, “Hey I want you to know that the [SEYA program], is actually my program and [SEYA], they’re helping run it, they’re a community partner, but these are my programs, this is my thing” (Murphy, 398-400).

Clearly Umbridge saw the program as belonging to CF, because CF was funding the program. Because SEYA did not communicate this relationship effectively and in public, Umbridge perceived that the two organizations were now in competition. Additionally, Umbridge’s church providing funds to SEYA implied that she was losing control. As the primary donor to the afterschool program she maintained a large amount of say in how it was run. However, once SEYA began receiving large donations from the church, it became clear that her voice was not the only one of value. As it began to be communicated more prominently that the program was more closely identified with SEYA, the relationship shifted from collaboration to competition. Here the constitutive force of communication can be seen. When it was communicated that SEYA was no longer reliant on CF, competition for the same resources began. With limited donors in the region NPOs are competing for donor contributions.

While all of the flows in McPhees structurationist approach proved to be dynamic through SEYA’s afterschool program transition, the final flow had the largest impact on organizational structure. Though texts such as annual reports communicate a steady relationship between organizations, interpersonal interaction creates dynamic relationships, which was highly apparent from case study interviews. SEYA has a consistent mission and goal, but how this is expressed is dynamic and varies per relationship.
Conceptualizing communication as a constitutive force in organizing is demonstrated evidence showing SEYA’s practices essentially affirm the first research question. The centrality of communication in organizing is fundamental to SEYA’s operations and its transitional period; their communication determined not only how and who would organize, but also created the structure of organizing. Despite its lack of institutional frameworks, communication as conceptualized post linguistic turn is applicable in a small NPO context such as SEYA.

**Research Question 2**

How do SEYA’s communication patterns impact how successfully they can fulfill their mission?

SEYA is an organization that at almost every level relies on interpersonal relationships for success. This manifests in the high staff-to-student ratio, the way that community partners are made (Murphy; Turner), how parents find out about SEYA programs (Keith; Plains), and even how volunteers and staff are recruited as volunteers (Alltop; Plains; Werth). The restrictions that were put in place aimed at reducing SEYA’s community partners, thereby reducing its ability to grow, both in strength as a program as well as the reach of its reputation. SEYA’s tendency to communicate in this way has been both beneficial and harmful.

Following will be a brief review of their core values and mission statement. After that SEYA’s communication patterns will be analyzed as to whether they help or hinder their overall philosophy. Largely their communication is driven by the importance they place on relationships, but this value was somewhat compromised during the transition period.

SEYA mission statement and slogans will be paraphrased and modified to protect the organization’s anonymity and minimize the potential risk to the organization and its members. SEYA’s post transition slogan is about impacting youth, which is given further detail in the
expanded mission statement. The mission statement expands on what it means to have an impact, articulating that it is done by walking alongside youth, providing opportunities for growth, and giving them opportunities to see how God has uniquely made them and given them potential to make a difference in the world. In this brief description SEYA communicates an organizational identity that emphasizes horizontal relationships and partnering rather than a hierarchical top-down structure. SEYA also communicates eight things it values and seeks to incorporate in the development of its programs: respect for God, child-centered activities, spiritual formation, building of relationships, holistic learning, dignity and respect, diversity, and personal safety. Before the transition, SEYA did not cite spiritual formation as an aspect of their afterschool programming. However, because they have moved out of the schools they now have more freedom to incorporate religious values into their educational programs. In many ways breaking from the schools allows SEYA to align more to its original goals as a religious organization.

When asked how they normally communicated program changes or SEYA news, both Phillips and Murphy expressed an inclination to communicate in person (Murphy; Phillips f/u). This seemed to be the case for individuals ranging from donors, to volunteers, to community partners. The expressed purpose for this was to adjust messages depending on the audience. While this has often been a beneficial means to communicate and establish new community partnerships in the past, Phillips said:

Last year expanding to the second school, and this year with them wanting to expand the number of students served, we felt like our ability to communicate with volunteers was horrible. We don’t anticipate that ever being a problem again.

(Phillips, 468-470)
Communicating interpersonally became difficult because of the expansion into the second school. This required a number of additional volunteers and staff, which heightened the amount of time required to engage in interpersonal communication. Though communicating in this manner is inefficient when dealing with a large number of people, parents, community partners, and volunteers, all expressed an appreciation for this type of thorough, personal, and thoughtful communication. However, as the transition happened and SEYA was re-visioning its new program, it ran into problems communicating their intentions with everyone involved. As they moved out of the program and withdrew volunteers and resources, the former SEYA employees left running the CF program were confused as to what was going on. Phillips attempted to continue embodying SEYA philosophy in his manner of communication, but his level of success varied per individual.

SEYA’s primary mode of communication is through one-on-one or one-to-small group communication. The purpose of this is largely driven by SEYA’s emphasis on interpersonal relationships. SEYA employees seek to cultivate positive face-to-face relationships with volunteers rather than simply disseminate information. Because of this Phillips tried to sit down with every party involved from the former staff to the principals at the schools to explain the new program and how the transition was going to take place (Phillips). While his goal to communicate personally with each of these individuals was to minimize confusion, speculation, and potential hard feelings, timeliness became an issue.

One of the largest drawbacks to individually communicating with small groups of people is its inefficiency. Though he eventually was able to sit down with everyone, the extended time required to reach everyone allowed rumors to spread about the transition. Former staff and school administration were left wondering if SEYA was going to pull kids away from
their program. Phillips commented on his communication patterns through this specific incident saying:

It works out the best if I can get in there and talk to ’em, but I have had to communicate even through this transition using email. Because someone told me that there’s an email floating around saying that [SEYA] was trying to steal kids from the two afterschool programs for our new one. (Phillips, 306-309)

Once again communication developed out of SEYA’s control as it had with the Experience Worship Church (EWC) incident. While Phillips was able to send an email explaining the situation, individuals had already experienced feelings of betrayal and hurt.

Several interviews pointed to the Lincoln site coordinator Joanne Boyer, who started the first year of the program with SEYA, as being the most hurt by the situation. While Phillips intended to sit down and talk with Boyer early on, their schedules did not line up, so they were unable to talk until after the transition was underway. A parent who had been talking to SEYA about their new program came to Boyer with questions about the new program, not knowing she neither knew about nor was a part of it. Commenting on this, Boyer said:

Even the first parent that said something to me, because I didn’t know they were trying to take our kids, the first parent that said something to me made me a little angry. And [the parent] said, don’t tell [SEYA] I said so! I said I’m not gonna say anything. But it hurt. Because it shocked me, because I didn’t know that’s how it was going to happen. And no one had said anything to me. I know what they wanted to do, I heard, I heard I hadn’t met with Dan because he had to do this or I had to do this, just a lot of things would transpire. [The parent] didn’t know that I didn’t know, and she said, what is this going on with [SEYA]? (Boyer, 262-269)
This confusion was caused by the breakdown in SEYA’s usual communication channels and resulted in Phillips implementing mass email to help clear up this specific situation. Through the email, Phillips was able to clarify that the program they were starting was unique in nature, and would serve a smaller number of students. Additionally they were strategic in advertising to three specific groups. 1) Students from the neighborhood who were currently not involved in any afterschool programs, 2) families who had participated in any SEYA summer camps or youth ministries, and 3) parents that contacted SEYA. He noted that there would be overlap between some of the summer camp or youth ministries students and children currently in the program, but they were not pulling from any lists of students in the CF program.

While it was Phillips’s intention to embody SEYA core values, this seemed to break down because of external forces. His method of communication worked well as long as the communication remained within the control of the original sender. As messages began being sent by secondary and tertiary senders, problems developed. Bringing their planned communication strategy into the framework introduced by Lewis et al., their communication fits the “Quid Pro Quo” model (2001). In this model recipients of information are those “stakeholders who are most crucial to the change’s success” (Lewis et al., 2001, p. 22). The advantage of this model lies in its efficiency, but it runs the risk of leaving individuals feeling left out and ultimately burned, as was the case for SEYA.

When this method failed for SEYA, they adopted the reactionary model. Those adopting this model in the Lewis et al. study were those who “were trying to survive a change” that was nominally forced on the organization (2001, p. 27). While the majority of SEYA communication did fit this model, certain situations within the transition called for crisis.
communication. Rarely is SEYA reactionary, rather they seek to be proactive and intentional in their communication.

Through the transition the language that Phillips chose to use when talking about the new program was very purposeful and continues to be developed. They want to develop a language to talk about the program that aligns with their core values and philosophy. SEYA hosted a series of open-house meetings and invited parents to come hear about the new program. In the midst of these meeting Phillips felt conflicted about the language he was using to talk about the program. He said:

Ah, ya know, I struggle with the word “mentor” now actually, because this idea of mentor, kind of implies [pause] If you’re talking about having a mentor, often it implies that you don’t know how to do something. You need a mentor to help you walk through it. So we’re looking for a new word. Because even when you’re talking to parents about the program, and ya know, I’ve used the word mentor and then I’m thinking, does me talking to them is that like telling them that I think their kids need more than them?…We gotta come up with something different, because I’ve heard a couple times now that mentoring is starting to get sort of a paternal, sort of feel to it, and that some people are kind of put off by the use of the word mentor. So I wanna think through what’s some different language we can use. (Phillips f/u, 313-319…320-323)

While interpersonal communication embodies much of SEYA philosophy, it is not the most effective means of strategically reaching new groups of people. Several community members living within blocks of SEYA shared that they never knew about SEYA until they accidentally stumbled upon it. A parent who has volunteered in the program both prior to and
post transition said, “The only thing that I wish they did more was put their name out a little bit more. Because we just kind of stumbled upon them” (Vanessa Keith, 19-21). One of their largest partners only found out about SEYA because the two organizations happened to be at the same event and ended up beginning a conversation, which led to the initiation of a strong partnership (Murphy; Turner).

Because SEYA does not desire to expand its programming, maintaining its communication strategies are appropriate. Phillips expressed that rather than growing larger they desire to grow stronger as an organization and with the afterschool program. They have no desire to play the numbers game, but prefer to make a deep impact on the students already involved. Moving out of the schools drastically cut the number of students they are serving, but has allowed them to provide more holistic support for students from grades two to twelve.

Research Question 3

Is there a gap in communication and SEYA’s mission statement and core values? If so, what is at the heart of this issue?

Question three was indirectly addressed in examining question two. Here it will be further explored as SEYA’s communication extends beyond the organization. Through interpersonal communication, SEYA has sought to cultivate close relationships within the neighborhood members as a natural outflow of their holistic vision. As noted above a familial ethos has been fostered within the organization and larger neighborhood community. In this interview excerpt Murphy talks about this community feel being a very purposeful element of their mission that was established because of her relocation into the neighborhood:

One time we were eating spaghetti on my porch and we were, it was me and a couple of the kids, and I started like laughing about something. And I’m like, it
just had this like almost like holy-esque moment, where we were just like in-sync and the kids were having fun, and ya know the neighbors were walking past, and it was a warm summer night, and we’re just eating pasta on the porch and just being fun. And so like, and I said something to them like, wow it really feels like, I don’t know, we just feel like family right now. And the girls started busting up laughing, the high schoolers, and I’m like what’s so funny, and they’re like, Miss Lindsay you’re just now realizing this? And it just takes me back that they’ve established this in their minds, like a really long time ago. And it might have been when I moved into the neighborhood or it might have been before then. It’s a very, like that communal based togetherness. (Murphy, 137-147)

SEYA desires to be a safe place of consistency for the kids of the Southeast neighborhood. The need for consistency in the lives of students was expressed by parents as well as staff in the program. When asked what was difficult for the students through the afterschool transition one parent commented:

As taboo as it may be they have ya know people coming in and out of the house and they’re constantly moving from place to place. And a lot of these kids are even homeless, and school should be the one place, if not at home, that they should be the same, things should be normal. (Vanessa Keith, 192-195)

Staff hired by SEYA, despite disagreements and frustrations with CF, continued to work in the program once CF took full ownership. The reason for many of these staff decisions was their desire to provide consistent relationships for the kids. One of the most damaging aspects of SEYA’s removal was causing a break in consistent relationships and programming. Each staff member was offered a position in the new SEYA program, and all expressed frustration with the
way CF was running their program. Alltop said, “It just seems like City Funding isn’t stepping up to where they should be. You know, like not giving us supplies, or like just like pencils or something like that” (Alltop, 120-122). When asked why they stuck with the program, each of the staff responded similarly. Alltop said:

   But in the end I think the only reason I stayed at City Funding is just because like I didn’t want to be another person in those kids life that just was like hey I give up like just because things are hard for me and as an adult like doesn’t mean that I should completely just up and leave all of these kids, and I didn’t know like how bad the transition was gonna be and stuff like that, and I just didn’t want like some random teacher coming in and just being like really hard and not getting to know them and build that rapport. (Alltop, 206-211)

And Boyer, the Lincoln site coordinator said:

   I do it because I love kids. I care about kids and they don’t need any more detachments. They’ve been through three principals since I’ve been here. This one says she’s not leaving, and if I could have left and went with [SEYA] how would the kids have felt?—that was not even a passing thought in my mind. (Boyer, 294-298)

   Though SEYA has achieved stability in some ways as a community member, they have contributed to the tumultuous nature of the lives of some of these students by removing themselves from the schools. Through re-aligning their new program with their core values they have contributed to the instability of the neighborhood they were trying to combat. Moving out of the schools has allowed them to create programs that align much more directly with their original mission and purpose, but in doing so they have left many students underserved. The CF
program remains in the schools, but it does not compare to what SEYA was able to provide. Werth described the CF programming after SEYA had removed its support saying:

Now it’s like, they don’t really do anything. They eat their snack. Fourth graders go in the gym for like 20 minutes, then they’re stuck in a room all day. They don’t have any enrichment anymore. So, I really don’t have to do anything because a lot of the time they’re just in the cafeteria or gym so it’s like, going back and forth between those two rooms. You know it doesn’t take a whole lot. I mainly just sit in the cafeteria with the kids that get in trouble. [laugh] That’s like my job now…. I’m like a glorified babysitter [laugh]. (Werth, 31-38)

SEYA’s withdrawal from the school meant withdrawal of their resources leaving students with very little. Boyer felt SEYA had really abandoned the students as they withdrew resources, volunteers, and staff. Though many feel SEYA has stepped away from the students they intend to help, they continue to be very present within the neighborhood, but not in the school building. Despite the program’s shift in location, SEYA has communicated to the principals and the school district that they want to continue being a community partner.

So we’ve told the school principals that our science library here, the curriculums we have, those are available for the schools during the school day, if they want them. And we have volunteers who can’t come afterschool, but maybe they can come during the day if they would ever need a volunteer to come and just be there with a teacher who wants to do some of these curriculum. (Phillips f/u, 205-209).

Despite this transition leaving community partners hurt, SEYA desires to move forward with a renewed commitment to being a consistent presence in the lives of the kids in their program. While SEYA did not initiate this change, they have decided to make the most of the
opportunity through restructuring their new afterschool program to align more with their mission and vision. Phillips’s biggest critique of their own program as it once existed was that support for students completely ended once they got to middle school. Though SEYA had Bible studies and church for middle school and high school students, they no longer received the educational support they were getting in grades K-5.

So one of the things that we’ve always realized is that we have afterschool for elementary students, we don’t have anything like that after they leave elementary school. So we have junior high club, we have a high school club, but how…yeah we just don’t have the kind of, sort of, intense support. Middle schoolers and high schoolers get a lot more mobile, and get more involved in extracurricular stuff, so that’s a challenge to do your traditional afterschool stuff with them (Phillips f/u, 307-312).

In order to consistently track with these students, SEYA will hire mentors for each grade in the program. With several mentors to a grade, and ten students per grade being the current student cap, mentors will be able to build consistent and strong relationships with the students in the program. These mentors will be a presence in the lives of these students both in and out of school. Their goal is to hire mentors, likely college students, who will be able to go into the schools during the school day and help students with homework, that will be at the Christian oriented clubs in the evenings, that will run homework help nights after the afterschool program throughout the week (Phillips f/u). They would be hired with the purpose of walking alongside these students and helping them discover their gifts and strengths (Phillips).

Even as Murphy spoke about the familial approach of SEYA in the community she expressed:
I would say it’s very family oriented but it’s not in any ways like we are replacements for the family that the kids have. It’s very much so that we just want to be a resource to families and parents as, it’s a very together feeling and a communal—we’re in this together sort of feel. (Murphy, 109-112)

SEYA desires to create this support system through their new pipeline approach to the afterschool program. The pipeline is a result of SEYA re-evaluating the previous program and has come from refocusing and expanding on their mission established twenty years ago. Through this process SEYA has crafted a new mission statement, not abandoning their previous one, but now calling it their slogan. Their mission statement serves as a means of explaining more fully what it looks like to live out their slogan.

The microcosm of SEYA has provided an image of the constitutive force of communication as understood through the linguistic turn. Because of the perlocutionary nature of communication, SEYA and CF were placed in competition with one another as they competed for the same limited resources. While maintaining consistent and clear lines of communication between the organizations may have prevented or aided in this transition, this does not address the underlying problem of scarce resources. As federal funding has decreased for these types of programs, NPOs are forced to compete, participating in profit driven markets pulling them away from their original goals of achieving good.

Because the NPO landscape is continuing to face depleted resources, it is crucial that NPOs build strong and lasting partnerships. If a community of NPOs hopes to make deep and lasting change in the lives of the underserved they must prioritize unity and the benefit of others. Addressing communication issues may reduce the likelihood of division among NPOs, but larger issues must be addressed. This case study has glimpsed the poorly functioning state of market
driven NPOs embodied in a localized expression, with the hopes that further research might be done to achieve systemic change. Adopting constructive communication strategies can only be the start, hope for the underserved will only come, as systemic change become a priority.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. SURVEY

SEYA After-School Program

Thank you for taking our anonymous survey to help improve the South East Youth Association After-School program. Your answers will help guide SEYA as it hopes to better serve community needs.

Your answers will be anonymous unless you choose to answer yes to the final question, which asks you to leave basic contact information. Responses to this survey will not affect your eligibility to participate in the program.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please contact Peter Simionides by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (330) 936-5534; E-mail: peters@bgsu.edu Any questions may also be asked of the graduate student’s advisor, Dr. Tom Mascaro by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (419) 372 0514; E-mail: mascaro@bgsu.edu

Please select your choice below. The "agree" button below indicates that:

• you have read the above information
• you voluntarily agree to participate
• you are at least 18 years of age

○ Agree
○ Disagree
What school does/do your student(s) attend?
[List of schools was provided in survey, withheld here to uphold anonymity]

How did you hear about the South East Youth Association’s After-school program?
ex. Flier, Word of Mouth, Online, School newsletter, etc.

When did your participation with the South East Youth Association begin?

Why did you choose this program?
(cost, no other programs, convenience, safe place, etc)

Has this program benefited your student(s)? If so, how?
What role do you see the South East Youth Association playing in Midville?

How do you see the South East Youth Association meeting the needs of the community?

Responses are not limited to after-school program

What South East Youth Association programs are you aware of?

Would you be willing to participate in a follow up conversation about the South East Youth Association?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "Yes" above, please provide your name and contact information.

Name and preferred contact method (email, phone, etc.)
If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please contact Peter Simionides by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (330) 936-5534; E-mail: peters@bgsu.edu Any questions may also be asked of the graduate student’s advisor, Dr. Tom Mascaro by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (419) 372 0514; E-mail: mascaro@bgsu.edu
APPENDIX B. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview Transcript: Alltop, Mariah

Date: January 18, 2016

Principal Investigator: Sweet, uh so just to start I guess like how did you first get involved with like the South East Youth Association?

Mariah: My roommate Gabriella did one of those service learning trips, and she got really excited about the summer program and she had an interview and they really wanted people at the time, and so I went with her to the interview, and we both interviewed at the same time because they really needed people, and then I started, well I got hired for the summer program, and then I started working there and after that I became the science enrichment teacher at afterschool and then I became the tutor. So it was just like a series of getting more involved within the agency from that initial interview. [00:47]

P: Okay, so are you currently, are you still a tutor at the afterschool program? Like what..

M: Um...it’s weird to figure that out with the whole split thing. Like I work at Lincoln as the tutor but um, still like supporting SEYA with like volunteer things so, [laugh].

P: Okay

M: Yeah.

P: So do you still volunteer with the SEYA? Like aside from the afterschool program?

M: Every now and then, yeah.

P: Okay.

M: But. Once uh, this year is over, I’m probably gonna commit more to SEYA, because I don’t really [laugh] I don’t like City Funding that much, but [laugh].
P: Okay, and that’s who…
M: That’s who took over the afterschool program at Lincoln.
P: And did you, so before this past year, did you have much contact with City Funding at all?
Were they involved at all?
M: No.
P: Okay, um. I know it’s like super ambiguous, but what role do you have now, just like in the
afterschool program, like what’s that look like for you?
M: I’m the fifth grade enrichment tutor. So I just, I’m in charge of 11 of the fifth graders and I
get to discipline them and basically you just follow them around through every activity they have
during the day. So from like 2-530 you’re their direct like teacher tutor person in charge. [02:13]
P: Okay….Have you done, before you did the South East Youth Association afterschool
program, had you done other afterschool programs or volunteered with similar like kinds of
programs?
M: Nah.
P: Okay. Is there anything that like sticks out to you about, like I guess the whole transition,
Joanne kind of told me the other day about like since South East Youth Association has pulled
out, there’s no enrichment kind of piece to that anymore.
M: Mhm [affirm]
P: Is that like the biggest change? Has that made like a huge impact on the program?
M: I think that made a really big difference on the program now. Because we used to have, we
would come in and we would have like our snack and then we would do exercise and it was
really structured as to like you have science on Tuesday and Thursday, you have art, and the kids
had that extra time to like go and do stuff, and now we’re just basically making up things to do
for them and they’re getting really frustrated. And it was easier to like manage their behaviors
when we were going to different enrichment things, cuz you could have more of that one on one
time and knew that they were going to something different every half hour or an hour or
something like that. But now it’s just they’re on computer games and they’ll get there for like,
they’ll have their snack then they all they do is they’re either on the computer, sometimes they
have gym time but they’re just sitting down and they don’t really have much to do sometimes we
color. But there’s no structure anymore and its making the behavior, in my opinion because I
have fifth graders and they have like really big personalities its making their behavior worse
because they’re just a couple of times I’ve hear them say like, I don’t care, I’m bored, I don’t
want to play these computer games, if I get in trouble what does it matter, ya know I’ll just be
going home which is more fun that being here. So it’s that, I don’t know, it’s just hard to
manage.

P: Yeah.

M: Sorry [phone alarm went off].

P: That’s alright….So now like with less structure with less like, I mean, with less to hold the
kids attention,

M: Yeah

P: There’s kind of like less, less driving them to behave, I guess?

M: Mhm [affirm]. And then when the South East Youth Association was there and we had that
different enrichment, they got excited about learning about science or having a checking account
and stuff like that, but now it’s just like, why am I doing any of this, I don’t, I don’t care about i-
Ready, I don’t care about school, I just, I don’t know it’s just a weird shift in the kids mentality.

Like what is the point anymore, kind of a thing.
P: So that’s just been like over the last month? Maybe?

M: Yeah.

P: Dang, is that just in like the older kids? [05:11]

M: I think more so in the older kids, cuz they can understand what’s going on. The third grade just loves it cuz they’re like we’re on computers every day we don’t care. I’m not really with the fourth graders at all or get to see them like react, but they’re in the back room and they pretty much stay in that room almost all day. Which can’t be good for a little kid [laugh]. And I think just not having the time to go and do something that’s hands on, er, something like that just really bugs them. Especially the fifth grade cuz they have such developed personalities that they just want to do things and they get bored easily and you always have to be on your feet, so.

[05:50]

P: Has that been? So as kids have like come to you and asked like what’s the point of being here, how have you like handled that?

M: Um… a couple times, I don’t know if you’re familiar with the South East Youth Association like their paid system. Where if you did really good in school you got paid. There were…I don’t know there were just a lot of questions like, why don’t we have that anymore, why don’t we have science anymore? Where’d the enrichment lady go? And I just said things like, we’re changing it up, ya know like we’re not having that anymore, we’re just bringing our focus onto something different, and playing games and then you’re gonna do your i-Ready and then focusing back onto like the schedule that we have now and then trying to give them more options of like, oh maybe I’ll talk to Joanne today and we can get gym time. Or if its nice out we can go outside, or something like that, and sometimes Gabriella, she like prints out coloring pages and we find some random math sheet to do or something like that. But it’s just like really hard to [laugh]
keep coming up with ideas every week. [06:52]

P: Yeah, so the South East Youth Association like provided that like through the enrichment, these activities and stuff

M: Mhm [affirm]

P: To keep the kids entertained and to provide structure?

M: Yeah

P: So that put a lot more on you guys as volunteers, and like are there less…are you a volunteer or staff?

M: Staff.

P: Okay

M: We don’t have any volunteers anymore because, uh, the lady at City Funding just, I don’t really understand her mentality about kids and how she should live like out things in her life, but um we don’t have any volunteers anymore, she doesn’t want to partner with like Midville Christian University or Jarabacoa University. And that was a giant aspect of all of our volunteers. Like the football team from here came. All of the, we had a lot of social work classes that came there, and Jarabacoa University had like different classes that they had to do like 10 hours of community service and they would come to the South East Youth Association and now we only have one volunteer, which…um… I know for the fifth grade, cuz I can’t really speak for most of the rest of the kids in the program. But for the fifth grade it was, it kind of sucked, because football players coming in was like a monumental thing for like the boys cuz they had that time where, I mean, it would get really boring having a girl staff like 24/7. They. But it was nice for them to like go out and play football with the football players and like have the football
players tell them that school is important and stuff like that. And losing that I think was just really heartbreaking to them.

P: Mhm….hmmm. [08:40]

P: So the way that the transition has affected the program has been like, no more enrichment time, pulling out of like all the volunteers, you lose a ton of volunteers and like the guys coming and just the student to adult ration comes down a lot. Are those the two main changes?

M: Yeah, for the most part. And then I don’t know, it just seems like City Funding isn’t stepping up to where they should be. You know, like not giving us supplies, or like just like pencils or something like that. And then they got into this big, I think this is probably the stupidest part of this entire thing [laugh] is like, um, South East Youth Association used to partner with Midville Mission and they got like extra food and like, and…City Funding I don’t know why they did not like that, only bec.. I think it was just because, well what they told us was that they wanted each program to look alike, but I think that was just another way to just push the South East Youth Association out and so they said like no community partnerships so that’s how the volunteers were done, and like Midville Mission which kind of…In my opinion was a really stupid thing to do because Midville Mission was just giving us extra food and we were helping these kids take home extra food, and sometimes it wasn’t even for them it was for their little brothers and stuff like that. And then it got cut and I don’t know it just…That was like the hardest part to see, like why would you take food away from kids when you could have the option of like stepping up your other programs to make sure that these other kids are getting just as much as the other program. And then we still have kids that like at the end of the day, take home all the extra milk, like shove their book bags full and stuff and it’s just, frustrating to see when you know that there’s that need and somebody just was like whatever, I don’t want that [laugh]. [10:47]
P: Yeah….So from your perspective I guess, has like, City Funding kind of like communicated their reasoning behind, so they’re tying all community partners and…in all of this… [11:00ish]

M: They… they haven’t really, they came in a couple times but as an agency like they haven’t taken the time to talk to us as a staff. And to like say why they did all this stuff, and they kind of just put it on Joanne to explain it all to us and be that facilitator. So their communication is kind of awful, because I really still don’t know who runs the place. [laugh] I’ve seen like a couple of people come and I know that Amy has, she’s one of the people that’s in charge, because she came a couple of times, but and there’s like two women. But aside from that like I don’t really even know who’s on the board at City Funding, I don’t know. Like at South East Youth Association there was that like, you knew everybody and even though Dan wasn’t there every day or Lindsay, like they still had extra things to like talk to you and say like hey how’s it going. And it was just, like you knew the directors and stuff, with City Funding you’re just like I don’t even know who runs this place, but I’m still gonna be here. [laugh]

P: Yeah. And like you’re technically employed through them?

M: Yeah.

P: Okay.

M: It’s just weird to like get paid from something and still like not even know [laugh] who’s paying you. That’s awkward in my opinion.

P: That is kind of strange.

M: Yeah.

P: So you don’t feel like any support from them as an organization…

M: No.

P: Really individuals
M: Yeah…I mean the times that they came in, it’s just been like really weird. Because it’s just like, everybody be on your best behavior and make sure that you like impress these people and stuff and…

P: has that been like Joanne that initiated that?

M: yeah, but it’s just like really weird and they just seem so cold, like, and that’s probably not who they are as people, but as like an employee for them it just seems so cold. Because one time…I had a kid on my lap and that was just apparently a no no, you’re not allowed to like hug the kids and stuff like that, which I get because they’re like 5th graders and it’s kind of awkward if you’re just [laugh] hugging them and loving them, but I don’t know that part was just kind of annoying. But they just, they came in and… the woman, Amy, she had a pet bird and she was like talking about her bird for like this really long time.

P: Did she bring her bird with her?

M: Yeah, and she was talking about it for a really long time, but we had all these math problems to do, and we had a math teacher with us, and she took up like the entire time and so we didn’t get any gym time, because we were sitting there struggling through math. And it just was weird to see an administrator like not be cognizant of the fact that their math facts were more important than like hearing an exotic story about a bird that she has [laugh].

P: You’ve felt that, like it’s a complete contrast to how the South East Youth Association interacts?

M: Yeah.

P: Like Lindsay and Dan and kind of…So like had they come to the afterschool program?
M: Yeah. Dan would come... I don’t really remember like how routinely he came but he would always come at least... I don’t remember how many how often I saw him, but I would see him like at least once a month or something like that. And he always had... um he formed a South East Youth Association life group so like even if we didn’t see him there, we had time to like go and just talk about the program like things that we could fix and he’d give us like tactical things. And it made it relational not only like us talking to Joanne about it, but then just getting that outside perspective of like these are the why, this is the reason why kids are acting that way, cuz the program looks this way so... it was really nice.

P: That’s kind of a, that’s great to have the director of an organization be able to do that.

M: Yeah.

P: um... [15:00]

M: And I mean even when the agencies did split, like he still offered that bible study to tell us like don’t give up, like you’re still committed to these kids. And he never really cut that tie of communication there, which was really nice. And there was that extra support which made me like... just really admire the South East Youth Association.

P: Mhm, so are you, are you still doing that life group with them?

M: It hasn’t started up this semester, but I’m sure it will eventually [laugh].

P: Is that through Midville Christian University?

M: Yeah

P: Cool, um. Yeah could you maybe like talk a little about like I guess the, you were in a weird spot like being with the kids, you were with the South East Youth Association, but then the South East Youth Association kind of left and the tension of like do you stay with the kids? Do
you stay with the South East Youth Association? Because a lot of the other volunteers left, and you’re obviously still there. [15:59]

M: Um…it was a really hard decision to make. But in the end I think the only reason I stayed at City Funding is just because like I didn’t want to be another person in those kids life that just was like hey I give up like just because things are hard for me and as an adult like doesn’t mean that I should completely just up and leave all of these kids, and I didn’t know like how bad the transition was gonna be and stuff like that, and I just didn’t want like some random teacher coming in and just being like really hard and not getting to know them and build that rapport.

But then again it was just like really hard because everything that the South East Youth Association stands for is something that I personally want to see throughout like all of the world and I love their agency, I love how they communicate and like their vision for education and stuff like that. And like [laugh]. I really didn’t appreciate like the way City Funding found their way of like, their vision and like how they...there’s a really big differentiation between like what they said they wanted to do and like how they implemented that in their program and with South East Youth Association there wasn’t really that disconnect. Like they said something, they did it, they worked hard and they really worked to serve like the holistic needs of like every kids so if a kid couldn’t come to afterschool they would make sure that their parent like had a ride that week, or um, stuff like that. And it was really hard to make that decision but I just didn’t want to like give up on the other kids because I knew that the South East Youth Association was like a competent [laugh] place and they could find people that, um…were equipped to handle like everything there. So I knew that they had like competent people and that’s what drove me in the end to just like say I’ll stick over here just to make sure that like this half of southeast Midville still gets that kind of South East Youth Association mentality without them being there. So it was
really hard, but I knew that like, I knew that South East Youth Association would make it, so I think that’s what kept me at City Funding.

P: Yeah, you felt the need much more…

M: Yeah.

P: …at the school.

[18:27]

P: So you kind of touched on this a little bit, but it’s like a huge question that I’m like interested in. Um, like the South East Youth Association like they have like this mission this holistic vision and like mission statement, which I think is like now their slogan or something

M: Yeah.

P: [Mission Statement withheld to uphold anonymity]. Um. you said you’ve seen that like they’re committed to that and that plays out, is that something you’d say is really important to you in a nonprofit that you are working with…

M: Yeah.

P…or are willing to support?

M: Yeah, I think a lot of times you find agencies who like have this great mission statement, but then it’s just the fact that they wanna show on a piece of paper like oh, I helped like 40 impoverished kids in southeast Midville, but South East Youth Association it’s like yeah, we might not be able to like, I don’t know how to explain it, like, they know every kid, they know every family, they live out that whole bringing light into each kids lives. And I guess I saw that most in the summer program, when um, each high school staff has like two kids and they got to have that like one on one relational rapport with the kid and mold to his learning style, and ever since I started working there I’ve seen that translate into like every different aspect of what the
South East Youth Association does. And just getting to know the kids, building on their strengths, and I don’t know... I think that’s how they figure out their slogan, it’s just building on those strengths and giving that kid like a little glimmer of light, and that they have hope and that they can build upon what they are, and they just don’t give up on kids.

P: That’s really cool.

M: Yeah. [20:20]

P: That’s a good thing. Do you, so I don’t know what City Funding’s like mission statement or anything is... do you know?

M: I have no idea [laugh].

P: I should look that up... This is kind of a difficult question, and it’s kind of layered, and I just thought of it. Do you think the South East Youth Association should have like stayed in the school, like would that have been an ideal situation?

M: I don’t necessarily think I... that they could have. Because I don’t really know how it all worked out, like on the big aspect of what they all talked about as administrators, but it just seemed like the woman who was in charge of City Funding was just really angry that she didn’t have the personal recognition of like this is my program, this is what I did, I wrote the grants, but people connected with the South East Youth Association more because that’s who the parents saw, that’s who was bringing in extra food, that’s who like did the ultimate work of the program. And then when she figured out that the South East Youth Association was getting more credit, she just wanted to like push the South East Youth Association out pretty much, just to make sure that City Funding like had their name resonate within the community. And like I think as an agency I think it would have been almost toxic to be, still be there because they’re helping out the community and stuff, but then I don’t know it would just be weird because they’d always
have to like, oh we’re not a part of your afterschool like we can’t come there today and I don’t
know, just some of the things that happened to where they just, when they started out they said
that they were going to be equal partners and then all of the sudden just get pushed out. I don’t
know. I don’t think it would have been a good idea if they were still in the school. Maybe if it
was like the school day. I don’t know it might have been a little different, but…

P: [22:32] Has there been, you may have no idea about this, but do you know like if school like
administration has been involved in the kind of like the conversations about the program? Like if
the principals have been involved…

M: ….I don’t really know. Cuz they haven’t like, I know they probably talked to Joanne a lot,
but they like as a staff they don’t really.

P: Yeah.

M: I don’t think I could answer. [laugh]

P: That’s fine, that’s fine.

P: [23:05] So you’d say like a large part of the transition, I mean you kind of described like the
South East Youth Association as being forced out and pushed out and that being initiated by City
Funding, would you say that’s largely because of like their desire to like cultivate this
reputation?

M: Mhm [affirm].

P: That sucks.

M: Yeah, it really does.

P: [23:40] This is kind of unrelated, but not completely. How, how would you, if you were to
have a conversation with somebody who had never heard of the South East Youth Association,
how would you kind of like describe that? Because it’s a pretty layered kind of organization.
M: I think the South East Youth Association started out as something really small, and then over time it’s just grown into this wide sort of mentality that’s helped out a giant part of southeast Midville. And they have various programs. Obviously they’re like youth oriented with all of these kids and stuff, but...um. Of course they have like the summer program, summer camp, afterschool, then they have junior high club, and I think that’s about it, but...I don’t know, it’s just I don’t really know how to explain it, but they, it’s not that they it’s like 9-5 I see these kids, I’ve helped their grades, I can have a percentage of, when they started out they or, had D’s and when we ended they had A’s, it’s more of like I saw them in a summer program and like they almost follow the kids throughout their lives. And they take time to get to know them and the more I hang around the South East Youth Association I just see these kids come back and just ya know talk to Dan and Lindsay, or just pop in the garden and play with the dog, and you can tell that it’s like a safe space for a kid. Which is really cool to just, um, have that reputation in the community where kids like ya know, life might not be great right now, but I can come back and I know that South East Youth Association is a safe place, because one time, I was there and one of the little kids he got bullied at school and he came back and he just kind of hung out in the garden and was wasting time and then, it came around to where he just started bawling because he was bullied at school. And I got to see like Lindsay and Dan, just kind of work through that kind of stuff with him and it was just...monumental just to know that like they care about everything in the kids’ life. Like if there’s not a lot of food at home or if they’re getting bullied at school or if they don’t have a ride to an afterschool program. And I know a couple times Lindsay said that some of the kids would miss the bus and she would drive them to school, but it’s just, it’s just that they’re committed to everything about the kids their entire lives and they just really want to see them succeed. Where, I think every other agency it’s just I’m coming in, this is a
program, we want to make sure its effective, it’s just more of that rigid like 9-5 I want to help
these kids, but South East Youth Association is more of like a way of life. And they want to see
that vision throughout all of southeast Midville not just 3rd street, ya know?
P: Yeah.
P: [26:55] That’s really cool. Do you think that’s driven by their like Christian focus?
M: Mhm [affirmation].
P: Would you say like you even like as a volunteer have felt that like holistic care?
M: Yeah. I mean, I don’t know. I think it’s like a safe place, not only for the kids but for us too,
cuz they, I mean obviously Midville Christian University is a Christian place but they’re always
there to talk, and they want that, they want you to be successful and grow just as much as the
kids do and having that South East Youth Association after group…uh, life group was just really
great, and even before that we had um bible studies before summer camp to just, they give you a
lot of time as like a staff member to unwind in that safe space to just say ya know I’m
overwhelmed and these kids were awful today and they like don’t necessarily judge you for it
cuz they’re like yeah, I mean kids can be awful but like here’s, and then they give you tips for it,
but they just even when South East Youth Association and City Funding kind of split up, Dan
and Lindsay were always, and Joanne as well but she’s still like at the school so we see her
[laugh] every day, but um, they were just committed to saying like if you ever need to talk we’re
here and then Lindsay met up with us for coffee a couple times and we just still hang around and
to just talk about it and stuff. I don’t know. I’ve never really had a boss that like even after I’m
not technically with the agency like still wants to know how I’m doing in my life, so that’s really
kind of weird, but also awesome [laugh] at the same time.
P: That’s really cool.
M: Yeah.

P: [28:42] Yeah, this has been super helpful, and I think that’s like most all of the questions I have.

M: Yeah [laugh]

P: Is there anything else you think that’s like important to know or that like, yeah other things that like are important to this transition? Things that have stood out? Other thoughts you have on it?

M: I think when it comes down to it it’s just transition. I mean there’s gonna be parts that everybody could have done differently and obviously nobody’s gonna communicate to the best that you should, and there’s always gonna be some stuff that’s left out. But I think South East Youth Association really did try to make it work out and I think that they thought really long and hard about this whole transition and its better off for them at the end but it was just really hard at that time, because I know Dan talked to us a couple time and he just said you know like, it’s okay we’re gonna make this work, and he drafted up like numerous proposals to the woman and she just kind of like didn’t want to hear it, it was kind of a frustrating to see, knowing that South East Youth Association tried so hard to fix that lack of communication or the tension that was there and she was like eh no. [laugh]. So… [laugh]

P: Good.

M: Yeah [laugh].

P: [30:12] So do you think the South East Youth Association is like, as they’ve gone through this, so they’ve had this afterschool program for…eight? Maybe nine years now I think?

M: Something like that.
P: Um, it’s been like a pretty consistent vision and like plan, and like it’s not the South East Youth Association that has changed that’s like pulled them out of the schools, but it’s like City Funding?

M: Yeah for sure.

P: [30:50] ….Cool. Um. I have one last questions that I thought of. How do you, what do you think the community perception of South East Youth Association is? Do you think the southeast is aware of their presence or like what they’re doing? Do they feel good about the South East Youth Association being there?

M: Yeah, I do. I mean, I think it’s just because they’ve been so committed to that part of Midville that….I don’t know. Joanne for instance knows like every single kid all the way down to like their grandma, which I think is just fantastic. [laugh] I don’t know how she keeps them all straight. But…um, I think as a parent in the community and in general, it’s just I’ve seen them almost feel like really safe cuz they know who’s like in charge of their kid, they have a great rapport with them and….I know a couple times like parents have said that they really just, I mean, they just show up and like oh its Joanne, and we can talk to Joanne we don’t care, you know? It’s almost like an extended family that, I mean, kids from like years and years ago, even before I started will walk by and like all the South East Youth Association staff will know who they are and they’ll still keep up with them and I just think it’s really cool. And you can tell the community is really for it, and….um. Just walking by and everybody around, they’re just so supportive of the South East Youth Association, and I think South East Youth Association has really tried to make those community connections. Like they started out with Midville Mission and things like that. So I think they work hard on not only their community perception, but their kids and their families.
P: Yeah. Cool.

M: Yeah.

P: Those are good things to work on.

P: [32:54] To kind of like wrap back around, how does this like, how has the transition kind of affected you like, you kind of like talked about that in talking about other things, but how like have you felt like pretty affected by it?

M: Yeah… I think, even with talking with the other staff, the hardest thing is like, I mean as awful as it sounds, it’s like finding that passion again. Because with the South East Youth Association it’s not really hard to have passion for kids, they make that environment so easy that it’s just like a mentality. But with City Funding you walk in and you, like literally you have no idea what’s going on that day, because scheduling is so crazy and stuff like that. And the kids have a lot of problems dealing with the transition. The staff is already like kind of, I don’t really know what to say, but like you can tell the staff is tense about it, the kids are having like behavior problems about it. So it’s just, it’s not that you’re going in there with that mentality, of like oh my gosh I wonder what these kids are going to say today, I can’t wait to go to science with them or something. It’s just like how can I keep them entertained from 2-530 so that they don’t like [laugh] kill each other or anything like that. And…it just doesn’t seem like many people have the passion that brought them there anymore, which is kind of disheartening, but I think that’s the biggest effect it had on me is just not having as much passion. I mean granted I still love the kids and stuff, but like it’s more of a chore to come in to work rather than just when the South East Youth Association is there it just seemed like it came natural.

P: Mhm, you’re kind of put in this like survivor mode.

M: Yeah [laugh].
P: Yeah that would take a lot of additional effort to keep your head above water, and then try to go above and beyond….

[Closing remarks]
Principal Investigator: I spent a lot of time trying to get prepared for all these interviews and stuff, so cool. Could you um maybe fill me in a little bit about your perception of the recent transition with stuff?

Joanne: Why it happened? Or…?

P: Yeah

J: I’ll tell you what I know.

P: That’d be great.

J: Okay. The South East Youth Association had partnered with 21st. 21st century, that’s the grant writer person, that’s where the bulk of the money came from. When I first joined 21st and the South East Youth Association, the South East Youth Association would pay a portion of things such as enrichment, and if you wanted to do something special for the kids they would do that. They paid for the kids would earn money for their grades and things like that. They did a lot of positive things, they really did, in terms of helping keeping kids focused and giving them something that they may not have gotten. Such as they had martial arts and that’s very expensive. So they paid for that and then we had like art teachers, science teachers, and just a number of things throughout the years. So we always had something like really interesting and some of the things were costly, for the kids. I think people stepped on each other’s toes if I can put it that way, and the South East Youth Association kind of pulled out because 21st wanted them to sign something that they didn’t totally agree with. And they didn’t want the South East Youth Association name on things, but the South East Youth Association put their name on certain
things that 21st said oh no we don’t want your name. You know it was, my perception is, these
are the kids, we’re both serving kids now I’m taking my tools back. And I felt really bad about
that, and I felt somewhat in the middle because I worked for the South East Youth Association,
but really I worked for 21st century and the South East Youth Association because I do the junior
high club and I’m invested in South East Youth Association, because I mean I’ve been how
many years with them? And doing things with them, and everything has been very positive and
productive, but kind of when they pulled out they just took everything from the pencils to the
music box. You know what I mean? And I kinda felt like, and I told Dan this, I felt like you were
just making a total separation and then he said they felt obligated to doing that because…. [Woman
came in asking for Joanne, two kids were fighting and she needed Joanne. Joanne said
she’d be out in a minute 2:28]  
[After woman left, Joanne explained the kids were fighting earlier and needed separated]
J: [02:59] So I think pretty much, that’s kinda what happened, and as a result of that the kids
kind of suffered somewhat and being honest because we don’t have all the things that we did
have. So we kinda, like I said the kids are entertaining themselves. So it was like a
disengagement of a marriage, it was almost like a divorce, if that makes any sense? I think that
the South East Youth Association felt that they should have more say because some of the say
was taken. Things that they were permitted to do were taken away from them as well, so when
they were force to sign a…what is it? Memorandum of Understanding or something like that?
P: MO…MOU, or some..?
J: Yeah. They refused, took it to the board and the board said okay don’t sign it, and they
wouldn’t change any of it, so pretty much that’s what happened. And as a result of that a lot
of…some changes happened. So now the South East Youth Association is doing their, starting
their afterschool program and they kind of pulled on some of my kids. And I talked, well I, the parents came to me because I didn’t know who they were calling until after I talked to Dan. He said they were only gonna call kids that were in my summer camp. So some of the parents came to me and said, well are you leaving? I said no, then they said well I’m not taking my kids out. I don’t know if we’re gonna lose anybody or not, but then after I thought about it, first I was a little angry, but after I thought about it if they really wanna do that I’m okay with that, I have enough kids. Because I’m 50 plus, even though I should have more than that, but I’m still, I’m still good. So things are going okay, but I just felt like it was like a tear because we’re going after the same kids. What are we doing here? And what hurt me the most was we both come from a religious perspective and I think it could have been done a little better. I think we set aside what we should have been doing, when we made that separation the way it was made….I felt kind of hurt behind it. But you know, initially like he said they’re gonna pick up more kids in the community. Which is good and I think that’s very good, but I don’t know it just felt like, it just became somewhat personal initially, but like I said I talked to Dan and I still don’t feel that great about it, but we’re doing, we’re dealing. So I think that’s what it came from, it was like, we’re both supposed to serve the kids, we’re both Christian, we both believe in, and then all the while we’re messing stepping on things that we shouldn’t be stepping on and I felt that it could have been done better.

P: [05:26] It’s almost like you guys have very similar programs and you’re doing the same thing, so why…?

J: Well we were doing it together. And it seems like to me they could have come to something peaceable where they could…a compromise, but no compromise was ever made. And that’s pretty much what happened with that, with that separation.
P: [05:47] Do you still feel like you’re able to, you’re running the program here now?

J: Always have. Nothing that I’ve done is really different, in terms of what my responsibilities are and that kind of things. All of that is the same. The South East Youth Association was paying me, and now City Funding is just paying me. So that’s different. Pay is different. Not as much but, you know what, I’m retired so I’m doing what I know I’m supposed to be doing right now. I’m servicing kids, and I wasn’t going to…He did not ask me, I don’t know if the question was gonna come, it probably was gonna come up, but I know that I wasn’t going to go anywhere, and I think he kinda knew I wasn’t gonna leave these kids, and even though there’s controversy, I think to me personally they come first. So I told him just that upfront that I’m not going anyplace. I think we have two more years of the grant here, and I’ll be here, I do back so I know the kids the kids, so I’m here all day. From 730 in the morning until 6 o’clock at night. So I’m here all day, but I wasn’t going to…that part didn’t change my job duties didn’t change just the separation from…um we don’t have our meetings, we didn’t have much many meetings anyways so not that much has changed, but I tell you what did hurt. We had gotten a lot of help from college students, he took them all. And that kind of hurt. I think he’ll probably have more volunteers than he will kids. That hurt. There was a teacher professor that through the principal two principals ago, myself and Dan we met with her and her, she’s a college professor and her students have to do 12 hours, to ya know each, and that’s what they have to give to the school, and he took all of those. Along with others. That hurt. Because we don’t count them as, I count them as staff when they come because they’re very able to work one on one with a student, now no college students come in because he was able to get all of them. That hurts.

P: And you have…
J: We had the football team of Midville Christian University, but it was through him, it was through him. Midville Christian University was through him, the football team. And they’re all going over there as well, and I really believe they’re gonna have more staff than they are kids. So that shared, I think that could have been done a little better. You know what I mean? Well they still have Lincoln so why don’t a portion of you stay, but… they took all of them. That hurts.

P: [08:02] Something the South East Youth Association talks a lot about is the high staff to student ratio, is that something like has hurt you guys now because you don’t have as high of a ratio?

J: We don’t have it at all, that’ll hurt extremely where I know kids who need one on one that won’t happen again. That can’t happen because we don’t have the coverage. And our coverage really is 18:1. And that’s according to the state department’s numbers so we can have 18 students to one staff. And when we had a class coming in we could have 10, 12 students coming in all over the building just to work with kids. All of those students are now gone. So all I have now is paid staff and that’s it.

P: That makes it a lot harder. So no volunteers?

J: One.

P: Okay.

J: She’s not even a college student though. She’s a graduate, she still comes. And she did come through the South East Youth Association and she is continuing to come. Other than that… and we lost our science teacher and we lost our, another enrichment teacher that taught like economics or banking and that kind of thing we lost her as well. So that hurts a lot. All those staff are gone. That hurts.

P: Yeah, that sucks.
J: That detachment really because we kinda countered all of that. We knew it was gonna happen ya know every time a professor would bring a student who was here we’d have an interview and we’d tell them about the program they’d get a tour and be prepared and they’ll no longer come here. That hurts.

P: [09:38] Do you think there’s a general like hurt from parents and stuff? Do they feel hurt by the South East Youth Association pulling out?

J: I won’t say they’re hurt by the South East Youth Association, just a couple parents did come to me that they had already talked to, to try to encourage the fifth, some of the fifth graders to come to the South East Youth Association instead of continuing here next week. And one of the parents said they’re trying to give us something, but I’m not understanding that, and I just don’t know what’s going on. Some of the parents came to me because they were concerned like, what’s going on? Because I don’t know if they got the whole gist of everything. The only thing I can say is there split, ya know, you can make that decision. I’m not going to I’m going to be here with the kids. But I think some parents did not quite, they felt that, wow something’s different what is this ya know because it was, I don’t know. That kind of unsureness, ya know. From that perspective, I think parents…and he said he was only gonna call, like I said, the parents of the kids that were in our summer camp. And then uh, I guess some of the second, well some of the second graders were at our summer camp as well. The parents said I did talk to them that came to me because I didn’t know who they called initially. They were kind of like what’s going on? So I think maybe they did to say what’s going on, they that makes you skeptical. Because you know, the South East Youth Association usually something positive something, now we’re making a split, we want you and so I think, I think that made parents a little skeptical.
P: There’s a lot of uncertainty kind of?

J: Yeah, yeah I think so. As to why, ya know, there’s only so much you can really say even pertaining to that. I’m gonna be honest they even tried to get some of my staff, okay? Okay? I mean seriously. And they decided to stay. So I guess that kind of made me feel like, it’s you against me and I don’t want to feel that way, and like I said initially it made me realized that are we really basing it on what we’re really about? If we’re really about servicing kids, it wouldn’t of happened like that, I think it could have been a little better. And my staff said no they’re gonna stay. And that part is true, so, I don’t know, so. It wasn’t good, like I said really it felt like a divorce. You know a separation. And I guess he felt he was compelled he had to because of whatever the circumstances, I really think I don’t know it could have been done better. Maybe if we would have all had a sit down. I don’t know. I don’t know what was the best way. I don’t know. Because I’ve never been a part of that kind of thing because the South East Youth Association did do a lot with the kids extra, the financial end. The South East Youth Association ran the whole afterschool, they paid everything one year. Because we did five years with the grant. We had one year no money, none. They paid my, they paid all the staff, we had no teachers, but we had teacher volunteers. We had teachers here that would volunteer. And the staff would help them with the homework and they paid the staff and myself. The food came from Midville mission and they helped get school supplies and whatever kind of supplies that we needed as well. So they were invested, ya know, and then after this happened it was like I’m taking everything and I’m just ya know. I don’t know.

P: We’re doing our own thing.

J: Yeah. So, it kinda felt like a separation.
P: [13:09] It seemed kind of, I mean from my perspective, like very rushed, especially like halfway through the school year.

J: Yeah, January. They’re starting theirs next week I think it is.

P: Yeah Tuesday.

J: Would it have been even better, if at the end of the year we’ll stop, like at the end of the year it’s over. You know what I mean? The slow…

P: There’s no transition period

J: Exactly, there wasn’t it was like we fell off the cliff. And it became to a degree, and I’m being honest, it became a little personal to me. Because they’re asking my staff to leave, [laugh] you’re gonna do to me, and I just said to my staff up front. I need to know if you’re going to leave because I have to replace you. I can’t have a program with no kids. No one left. Even that portion would you do that if you’re about the same thing. If you’re about servicing the same kids, would you take the staff that are already here would you try to get other staff? You know what I mean?

[mumble] then I don’t know take all the volunteers, you don’t even need them. You don’t even need all the volunteers. And there were some volunteers that had to get 40 hours, and they would get a letter grade for it, so I lost a lot. Our school we lost a lot of people, we really did. I don’t know. I still feel the sting [laugh]. When I see my kids are entertaining themselves I truly mean that, we have… we have praise dancing and there’s about maybe 8 girls that do that, other than that we have nothing. We go outside we play on the computers, we do things in the gym. You know what I mean? We don’t have an enrichment piece, financially an enrichment piece, we don’t at all. When I went to the meeting Tuesday, we have meetings every other Tuesday I suggested that they give us some kind of craft stuff so we can do something with kids and can make something and take it home. But I really mean they’re entertaining themselves because we
just don’t entertain them. So I’m glad they’re coming. I know we’re a babysitter I know that.

And we’re keeping them safe, and we’re helping with their homework, and I do have teachers, hopefully I truly hope that they improve in their academics because that’s the key, that’s really the key, and that’s truly what it’s about. I have a teacher that’s been out all week, so everyday they’ve been going on i-Ready…Do you know the i-Ready piece? It kind of teaches them to… if you only get 70% you have to take this whole session over again, kind of like that. So it’s kind of getting them, working with them on the computer. So we have that piece and that’s what we do as a substitute for the teacher when they don’t have homework. So that’s what we’re doing now.

P: [15:38] So you’re still able to provide that tutoring and that educational opportunity?

J: Oh, absolutely, and we do have the teachers. We didn’t lose any teachers. We have our teachers academically, we have them. We have a math teacher for fourth grade…I bet all my, no I know all my fourth graders know all their multiplication facts to twelve. All the fifth graders don’t, all the fourth because of this teacher. She’s working that hard with them. She’s a retired high school teacher, math teacher so that’s what she specializes in. So she knows how to kind of work with them from that perspective. So there’s some good things. We do still have our teachers, I’m truly hoping that our academic piece does improve. Yeah so.

P: Has…

J: And see all my staff, one two three... three of my staff are attached to the South East Youth Association like they do bible studies with them. Mr. Plains my male staff, my only male staff he does the summer camp with them as well when they go on trips and things like that so he’s attached. They were, you know what I mean, they were attached to the South East Youth Association.

P: Is Mr. Plains the one that was out here?
J: Mhm [affirm]. I know they felt, maybe even a pull you know what I mean because probably wouldn’t [mumble]…but they’re still doing things, and I still do junior high club and I’m gonna finish out. I told them I’m gonna finish out the year, junior high in May and then I’ll be done. And I used to do the summer camp, you know that, this summer. So he has a teacher that’s gonna do that as well, so we’re good. So I’m kind of slowly just making my…I put years in there. It still kind of hurts though.

P: It’s a forced transition, it’s not something that you got to decide.

J: Or even progressively do it. Yeah…or prepared for it. Absolutely.

P: [17:33] Do you think that the South East Youth Association chose to do this, rather than they were forced into a position?

J: I think maybe it was a combination of both. If you don’t sign this you can’t play with us. You know what I mean? But by signing it I have to play by your rules, and I don’t want to play by your rules. You know that kind of thing. Maybe a combination of both and maybe that whatever that memorandum. Maybe it wasn’t fair, you know what I mean? In terms of what their expectation was and what they wanted, but I don’t know I think as adults who service kids, and if it’s truly about kids, I think they could have just have done it differently. I will say this, my kids aren’t feeling the pinch. In terms of that they feel like they’re missing something, because some of the kids were getting paid, we didn’t start the pay which is good, like getting paid if you get a C or above and that kind of thing. But we did that previous years, some of the kids kind of remember it. But we’re no longer doing that, they’re okay. We used to get the food from Midville mission. That has nothing to do with the….well yeah it does, we used to get the food from Midville mission, 21st century said we want all the kids to get the same food, so we get like a…you seen what we had, a…
P: Cookie and a milk.

J: Cookie and a milk. Midville Mission would have beans and franks, we had chicken, we’ve had waffles and sausage and syrup you know what I mean. But 21st cut us off for that before South East Youth Association made the split, they didn’t want us getting those kinds of things because other schools, all the schools weren’t getting them so they stopped us from getting them. The kids are still okay, they’re getting something, it’s not like, oh no I’m hungry I can’t eat I, they’re not doing that, they’re not saying I’m starving to death. They’re not, they’re not. Our kids are content with being our kids if that makes any sense? So they’re not feeling the pinch, but because we know as much as we do, we do, I do. You know what I mean?

P: You know that it could be better.

J: Exactly. Yeah, so…that’s true.

P: [19:38] You think that it’s sad to see these two groups that seemingly have the same vision and goal in mind, but do you think that from the South East Youth Association perspective they see their goals as being different from the 21st century grant, like their mission?

J: I don’t think it was, I really don’t. Initially, I don’t think it is, I still think it’s about servicing kids, it’s about showing love, it’s about all those very same positive things. I just think it became personal. Because, like I said we’re both two Christian organizations, really we are. Maybe 21st century doesn’t say we’re Christian, but the person who heads it is a Christian, so you know what I mean? I don’t really think they were, but I think that they just, became two separate entities because of….but I think that their goal, it was about the kids, all that is still the same, if you put them both together we still want to do the very same things. We want to take care of that tree, we want to grow it, we want to feed it, we want to, ya know nurture it, ya know we still want to do the very same thing. It just became, we’re gonna take our marbles and run. Ya know.
Because I still think it was the same. I do. 21st had more to service, and I understand that, less
money... I shouldn’t say less money, maybe they had a large amount of money but they had to be
spread it, you know what I mean, per se. And we couldn’t do all the magnificent things that they
could do with certain you know twenty uh, they could do, but I still think that they both wanted
the very same thing. but and I really do, they both wanted the very same thing. As a result of
that, even the principals got involved, they involved the principals. Downtown... administration
building was called. Just a lot of craziness that didn’t have to happen. Somebody called the
principal and said, when are the buses starting for the South East Youth Association. They said,
I don’t know anything about buses. And that’s true because we don’t know anything about buses
starting for the South East Youth Association, I don’t think we’re supposed to. Then somebody
called downtown and said what’s going on? That goes back to say, everything was so calm and
now it’s in an uproar and why? That kind of thing... I know some parents have to feel it. Even the
first parent that said something to me because I didn’t know they were trying to take our kids, the
first parent that said something to me, it made me a little angry, and they said, don’t tell them I
said so, I said I’m not gonna say anything but it hurt [laugh]. Because it shocked me because I
didn’t know that’s how it was going to happen. And no one had said anything to me. I know
what they wanted to do, I heard I heard I hadn’t met with Dan because he had to do this or I had
to do this, just a lot of things would transpire. She [the parent] didn’t know that I didn’t know,
and she said, what is this going on with the South East Youth Association? And then, offering
them you can get this, you can get this. One of the parents felt skeptical, what are they trying to
give me? So that made the uneasiness of the parents too. Why not start in the beginning, like why
start in the middle when so many other things are going on?...I think they both wanted the same
thing, they both wanted to nurture kids it was all about love and safety and community and
school and all of that, but it just had to happen. I think it became personal. From both
perspectives, I think it became personal I really do. I do. What do you think?
P: I’ve heard a lot of different things from a lot of people. Even sitting and listening to you it’s
hard to pinpoint this is the truth of all of it…
J: I do know this the truth is they both love kids, they both want to nurture kids, they both want
to help kids, but they couldn’t do it together anymore. As a result of that, that’s what happened.
P: [24:00] It always makes me really sad when I see multiple nonprofits in the same are that just
don’t get along, but they want to do the same thing.
J: Have you experienced this before?
P: I’ve seen similar things, not with an afterschool program, but I’ve been a part of a community
that wanted to start a thing so they wanted to start a nonprofit, but I was like this group is doing it
already why don’t we just partner with them? But I think a lot of people want to attach their
names to things, they want it to be their program.
J: And why can’t it be everybody’s? And if you’re really about what you say you’re about, why
is it important for a name? It goes back to…there’s a church that buys gifts for kids Christmas
toys, and then the parents will pay 30%. You’re familiar with what I’m talking about? And they
don’t want the families to know who they are, that’s a nonprofit. That’s somebody who’s really
about their father’s business. I don’t have to have my name on something to say I’m doing it
right. I don’t have to say look at me, look at them, then you know you’ve done a good job. I
don’t know, you know that’s what it’s about for me. Like I said I’m retired, yeah I gotta work to
help my kids because they don’t make good money [laugh] anyway I do it because I love kids. I
care about kids and they don’t need any more detachments. They’ve been through three
principals since I’ve been here. This one says she’s not leaving, and if I could have left and went
with the South East Youth Association how would the kids have felt? I’m working for the South
East Youth Association so I’m going. That was not even a passing thought in my mind. I told the
principal don’t even worry, I’m not going anywhere. I’m not going to do this to them. They’ve
had enough let downs. So our kids aren’t feeling the pinch. If I can help it I’m not gonna allow
it, and I’m glad my staff didn’t leave. I have some good staff. I have a good team, I really do.
Sometimes the kids try and run over them, but it don’t matter, they show them love, they’re not
yelling at the kids, they’re not, ya know what I mean? So I prefer that any day over anything
else. [26:03]

[Interruption]

J: [26:54] I’ve had some good staff come through the schools. I really have. They’re all gone.
P: And Mariah? And Gabriella? They were here before with South East Youth Association?

J: Yep, two years ago they did the summer program they came in for, is it called maybe an
internship? They stayed a week at like, they came for a whole week and they never left. And
Jordan came too. Do you remember Jordan? He was…
P: Mhm, he was one of my students at Midville Christian University.

J: Okay. He was a team. Those three were the team. They came in, they joined us, they
volunteered they started working with us and they got hired then they worked in the summer.
This is the second year with me here, those two [Mariah and Gabriella]. They tried to steal them
too. I said no I trained them you can’t…No they decided for themselves that they weren’t going
any place.
P: They wanted to stick with the kids?
J: They wanted to stick with the kids. You know about so many detachments, and look at what’s going on in our kids’ lives. What’s for sure? One constant thing is we’re gonna have afterschool up until this time, they’re gonna get something, and they’re gonna feel safe. So we have to have some kind of constant.

P: Awesome, that will be, that is super helpful. Thank you for your time, thank you for sticking with the kids. That’s a huge thing

J: Oh, I don’t mind, I’m glad you’re doing this. Maybe somebody will understand we shouldn’t do this because of…or think it through or have a meeting plan it through, so people can… We can agree to disagree and we can leave on a positive note. I’m gonna tell ya, I think that Lindsay she left Washington, and I know Washington was hard for her. She worked here with me and I think she thought it would be easy, [whispers] but I’ve been doing this for a lot of years. That’s why it’s kind of not as hard for me. Because I’ve been with kids, I’ve been in corrections, prisons, I worked that kind of things. It just went on and on, and I guess just filtered down from there. I don’t think that her leaving Washington had anything to do with the split, I just think that it was lot of craziness going on at Washington. I think it was just a combination of things. I really believe it was what Amy said, what she did and bottom line, but as a result all these other things happened. And you can still feel a little hurt by it.

P: [29:28] This whole thing emerged kind of from, I had been talking to several nonprofit directors in Midville, and several of them had noted that they see several nonprofits doing like the same things. From a macro point of view it seems like they’re all doing the same thing, their mission statements are all the same, but they’re divided. And just the question of why aren’t we partnering together, why aren’t we doing this?
J: You know that goes back to the little churches around town. All the little churches, we’re saying the same thing but we won’t work together and if you took all these little churches you could have a mega church. You could have so much more, and do so much more for the community. Same thing, we all have the same focus, but this is my way, this is mine this is mine. And then you start doing the pull, I think we were doing the pull when we were trying to pull the kids that were already here. I think it’s gonna be fine, and South East Youth Association existed before they merged with Lincoln and they had afterschool. To some extent, I don’t know to what extend because that was before me. I started with them when they started here. I got an interview right here at Lincoln with the principal and Dan. That’s when I first started at the South East Youth Association. When they started at Lincoln.

P: Had you been at Lincoln before that?

J: No. I was retired for a year. My son told me to get a life because I was hanging out at grocery stores. And I worked at the Y for three and a half years downtown. They were getting ready to send me to Huntsville to work with about 5 kids in the afterschool program. I had the interview here and I told them after the interview, to be honest with you I already have a job in Huntsville. I start Monday, and as soon as I got home they called me. And I’ve been here ever since.

P: I think it was a good choice.

J: I think it was too. I know it is. Because the kids what they’re going through I can kind of help some anyway.

P: Great.

J: Okay, I understand what you’re doing hopefully somebody can learn from this…
Notes taken during phone interview with Mia Brown:

Mia’s daughter currently attends the South East Youth Association after school program. Before this year she attended the Washington after school program through SEYA, and this past fall had been attending the Lincoln program. They have been involved with SEYA for two years now.

In the Lincoln after school programs, her daughter encountered problems with the other kids, and often didn’t want to attend. Lindsay told Mia about the new SEYA program starting January 2016, in the midst of their transition out of the schools. Because of her daughter’s reluctance with the school’s after school program she wanted her daughter to be around a better group of kids. Her daughter made the recent transition to the SEYA program, Because Mia thought it would be a good thing since her daughter enjoyed the program when SEYA was at Washington.

Some of the important things about the SEYA program are that they work more one on one with the students. This hands on attention wasn’t happening in the school program. She likes that there is a focus on kids treating kids well, an emphasis that was lacking in the schools after school program. Overall this new program has been a better fit, and her daughter’s attitude is totally different than it was while she was in the Lincoln after school program.

Because the program is so new, it is difficult to give a good evaluation of the program. At this point she wouldn’t change anything, nor does she have suggestions for improvements just
because it’s so new. A couple more weeks into the program she would be able to provide a better evaluation of the whole program.

One of the most important and valuable parts of the program is that it is a safe environment as well as its emphasis on God. Mia grew up believing in God and Jesus, she was brought up in church, and wants her daughter to grow with that same background. She believes that a lot of kids today would really benefit from still reciting the pledge of allegiance or including prayer in their education.
Vanessa: The afterschool program at Washington last year that the South East Youth Association had, and then the beginning of this year when the South East Youth Association was over there.

Principal Investigator: Okay.

V: And then she was in their summer camp last year.

P: Okay, sweet. Is she gonna stay at Lincoln?

V: She’s gonna be going to South East Youth Association next week.

P: Cool. So I have questions about that, but before we get to that. Just as like community members that live in the Southeast could you like share your perception of South East Youth Association in general? Like who they are, even if it’s beyond the afterschool program?

James: They, the South East Youth Association, they did a lot of outreach, and I’ve been impressed by what they do. Because I’ve see a lot of the kids in the community, they somehow have grasped their attention and have somehow been able to draw them in. What I have not seen is parent involvement, but they do focus on the kids and making sure they’re corralled up and they sure do a lot for the kids.

V: I would definitely agree, I like the role that they play in the community. The only thing that I wish they did more was put their name out a little bit more. Because we just kind of stumbled upon them. And even if I’m not on Facebook or Instagram, I don’t hear a whole lot about it. We kind of live back in a nook. So I don’t know if ya know I know the kids sometimes hand out
fliers and stuff like that so they may just not come down our way, but I just wish they were 
more…

P: More vocal?

V: More in your face, because it’s such a [J: Yeah] a good thing.

P: [02:02] Do they like mostly through Instagram and Facebook, that’s kind of how they share 
what they’re doing?

V: And they have their, their South East Youth Association families and it’s more of a word of 
mouth kind of thing. I know we have some other friends and their youngest daughter was 
involved with it and we’d see her over here sometimes. And it’s like oh okay, hey they’re having 
a block party this weekend you should come. So that kind of thing. And once I looked them up 
on Facebook and Instagram it’s like, oh there’s a whole world out there.

P: Right down the street.

V: Yeah.

J: Mhm [affirm].

P: [02:45] So what do you think, along that vein, what would be an effective means to getting 
community attention?

J: I think they would have to do more outreach to the parents, cuz you know the kids are not 
really gonna say much. They’re more interested in, ya know, Oh it’s the South East Youth 
Association lets go have fun. Then they go home after that. I think it’s gonna take for the parent 
involvement, so that parents can tell other parents ya know by word of mouth. That’s mainly 
what I see is gonna help ’em out.

P: Do you want to add anything [to Vanessa]

V: I agree, I concur [laugh].
P: [03:34] Cool, so with this transition, I know I think Dan tried to be really strategic with inviting specific people to be a part of the South East Youth Association afterschool program how did he approach you guys, did he communicate that to you?

V: Well I was working the program over at Washington before they left. So I was a part of it, and I was a part of the demise of that relationship. But I knew the South East Youth Association values that’s what I wanted to be a part of, that’s what I wanted my kid to be a part of, and when they were tossing around the idea, we’re gonna try to have something at the South East Youth Association, and I said let me know and we’re there. So it was, they didn’t even really need to approach us, it was just tell me when and where and we’re there. Because I like what they stand for as oppose to what this other organization was trying to turn them into.

P: [04:50] So do you see like the 21st century afterschool program and then the South East Youth Association afterschool program contrasting, not necessarily conflicting, but being different?

V: Not…they’re definitely different because South East Youth Association is more Christian based and that’s really important to us as a family. 21st century, they’re trying to pack too many kids into the afterschool program, which takes away from the one-on-one that these kids actually need. And I’ve still been working over there, and it’s really difficult when you have 20 kids in a group and every kid needs help with their homework. I can’t give, I can’t explain to you how to do this because everybody needs help. Whereas here when you have a smaller group of children you can focus more and say, okay I can help you two with these problems. It’s different in that way. I think the overall goal is still there, which, ya know, is to get these kids at the level they need to be in order to be successful, but their ways of going about it are a little different.

J: And just to add on to that I think that uh…mainly being the fact that they’re Christian based they’re able to add more, or instill more values and morals into the kids, I think that’s very
important to help make them more personable with one another. You do have to consider this is the hood, and these kids don’t necessarily come from good backgrounds. So I think just the fact that they’re reaching out to these kids and teaching these kids those kind of things, it’s going to be a major help in their lives.

P: [07:02] Cool. So do you think for people that, for parents that aren’t…..that don’t come from a Christian background would still value that from the South East Youth Association? Like that’s something they’d seek out?

V & J: Yeah.

J: I think so because, it’s almost like they’re a kid themselves, they’ve never been reached in that aspect. I mean they may have in most cases they’re not living that kind of lifestyle. [V: Mhm]

And ya know just my experience, I was an ex juvenile probation officer, and the biggest challenge was always the parents. Getting through to the parents because most of the time they were condoning the kid’s behavior, and the kid naturally just becomes a product of their parent.

So I think with the South East Youth Association here they’re able to make a big impact, like I said, if we can reach the parents, get them on board, get them involved ya know things will start changing.

V: Because once you see your kid excited about something, that makes you excited about it.

Even if it’s something that doesn’t interest you at all. Our daughter is very girly, I’m not girly, and he doesn’t get it. [James laughing] But when she dresses up and she feels pretty and she’s excited about the way she looks and she feels, and yeah I want to tap into that, okay how else can I tap into that. And if the South East Youth Association has something that’s, even if it’s something just the praise and worship at the beginning of the day that ya know, that keeps them going, then it’s like okay I love hearing her come home with stories. Cuz during summer camp,
they read, they used to reenact bible stories, and she’d come home and say, oh mom I was Jonah
today and she’d react, ya know, reenact her part and just seeing her excited made me excited for
her and that’s a lot of the reason why I wanted to get involved with the South East Youth
Association. Because it’s like why is she so happy? Or I wanna be happy too! [James laugh] So
that’s, that’s my take.
P: [09:45] Cool, that’s really cool. So would you say that the South East Youth Association has
really benefited, one like educationally for your daughter then like holistically?
V: Yes.
J: Yes.
V: Absolutely, absolutely.
P: Awesome. So to ask a little more about this transition, could you speak a little bit more to like
why exactly you wanted to stick with the South East Youth Association rather than keep your
daughter at Lincoln?
V: It was, it was the Christian basis of it and like I said, I saw everything kind of happen first
hand and the way this other organization was kind of treating the people in the South East Youth
Association, and I didn’t like it. I didn’t want to be a part of that. So it was really a no brainer for
me, to… I don’t want to say jump ship, because the kids are most important to me. And at a
certain point I had to block out all of the other stuff that was going on and focus on the kids. But
I don’t know. I think the transition, I think it was necessary. Yeah. Just once they tried to change
everything that changed the core values then it was like okay that’s not what we’re… that’s not
what we’re about that’s not what I want to work for, that’s not what I want my kid to be a part of.
And one school had more issues than the other, so she, my daughter’s still at Lincoln now
because they were just kind of left out, just kind of watching from the sidelines, but ultimately I want her to be here.

P: [11:57] So would you say, I’ve talked to a few people about this transition. From your perception of the whole thing, so you have the South East Youth Association program that I think has run in the schools for like 8 years now, so it’s been a pretty constant, like these are the values and this is the mission of this program and then City Funding they kind of changed that, so the South East Youth Association isn’t necessarily splitting away from that, but they’re still on the same trajectory? Would you say?

V: Uh…I could say yes…

P: You don’t have to [James laugh]

V: I think….I don’t know what City Funding’s motive is….I don’t, I don’t know and still kind of being a part of ’em, it seems like a lot of talk. And not a lot of execution. I don’t know if we’re different if they’re treating us differently because of the way everything kind of happened or if they’re actually, I don’t wanna say mean, but it almost feels like they’re kind of out to get us. Does that makes sense?

J: Mhm [affirm].

V: Yeah…um. So ya know how you have that group, who they’re fine ya know toss ’em a couple dollars just to get ’em to be quiet, that’s kind of what it feels like to me. So I don’t know what they’re trying to do right now.

P: Okay.

V: Yeah.

P: Do you have anything to add [to James]?
J: I really can’t expound on that ya know cuz she’s in it, I’ve only just, the only information I know is what she’s told me about that, as far as the interaction between City Funding and South East Youth Association.

V: Yeah, he’s kind of biased [laugh].

P: [14:21] has the reason for the transition been communicated clearly by the South East Youth Association at all? And I think you have a unique perspective because you’re in the midst more than most parents.

V: I’m in the midst of it. I was kind of lowered down, so I didn’t get everything first hand. I got a lot of hearsay, but the people that I was hearing it from, it’s like they’re not the type of person that would just fabricate something like that. And after getting to know the City Funding people, it was like yeah I could totally see them saying that.

J: Mhm [affirm].

V: Yeah, and….I don’t know…. [laugh]

P: [15:13] Do you think, as the South East Youth Association kind of went through this transition was it your perception that the South East Youth Association communicated well like to other parents that they’re like going to step out of the program?

V: As a parent…just as a parent I would say no.

P: Mhm [affirm].

V: Because I know…at Washington, it was just like when, when Lindsay left it was like they couldn’t handle…..

[Librarian came over and interrupted 15:52]

V: [16:13] Um… she just handed out a piece of paper on her last day and she’s like, hey this is…there’s a change happening. And, ya know, the ones that she was a little bit closer to she had
ya know prior conversations to. But I don’t remember a whole lot happening over at Lincoln. Do you [To James]? Because you picked her up.

J: [decline noise]

V: Because one of the South East Youth Association ladies is still over there so I don’t know what’s going on over there. But as a parent… I don’t think there was enough communication. And I, I don’t know if it’s because they just wanted it to be like a smoother transition like so parents wouldn’t really notice that there was a change. Ya know? Because when it’s so drastic like that it impacts the kids. And that’s what happened over at Washington. Because the staff left. So they had to redo everything. So it wasn’t just hard on us it was hard on the kids too. But they didn’t have those issues at Lincoln. Yeah.

P: [17:28] So you would say like the parents at Washington, and the kids at Lincoln definitely felt the South East Youth Association…

V: Oh yeah, yeah. Definitely. And I would say more so at Washington because the kids are so young, cuz they’re K-2 and they like normalcy and when you change their world up. I mean it’s everything and just a few days after, ya know, Lindsay had left, I mean it was just chaos. It was just complete chaos. And even now it’s… there still like well when’s she coming back? [laugh] Yeah.

P: So you’re still involved down at Washington?

V: Mhm [affirmation].

P: Are you gonna keep being down there?

V: I’ll be there on Fridays.

P: Okay.

V: Yeah, because I like the kids. They’re growing on me [laugh].
P: [18:26] That’s a really important thing to have that consistency and to have consistent people
there for them so it’s good to continue to be involved.

V: Yeah, and ya know I was telling him I had the opportunity to move to a couple different
classrooms, and cuz I just had Kindergarten before and it was like aww I making a difference.
He smiled today because I said something. So I don’t want to just leave them hanging like that
yeah.

P: [18:58] Do you think that the biggest, I guess like, perceived change that the kids feel is just
that, like the inconsistency in programming? Is there a change in the actual programs that they’re
doing over there?

V: We’re, we’re trying to get things back to normal, um… The the problem with this area is they
have a lot of inconsistencies in their life anyway… As taboo as it may be they have ya know
people coming in and out of the house and they’re constantly moving from place to place. And a
lot of these kids are even homeless, and school should be the one place, if not at home, that they
should be the same, things should be normal. And um, ya know, we even since we’ve started
back up since December we’ve had a few different teachers in and out. And they have their
favorites, but they kind of got a grasp of who’s supposed to be here. And the ones that are
sticking with them, they’re the ones that they gravitate to. The ones that aren’t there that often,
that are there maybe once or twice, ya know every couple weeks, they don’t, they just kind of
distance themselves from then. And they need that consistency.

P: [20:47] So kind of from, just that background to think about the need for that. Do you think
South East Youth Association, in general within the community has provided a bit of
consistency? They’ve been here for 20 years? I think. 19?

V: Yeah, 96 was it?
P: Yeah, I guess that’s 20 years now.

J: Yeah.

V: Yeah. Um… I think so. That’s the whole point of, I mean, the name itself. Ya know? If that’s where you can go to be safe. That’s where you go, and I think as long as the kids know it’s there I mean, I’ve never seen Dan or Lindsay turn a kid away, ya know? Lindsay’s right next door, she doesn’t turn those kids away. They knock on her door and she’s like, Come on in, ya know. Um, so I think that it’s very very important, I think the location is perfect. Its right where it needs to be and just… I think their consistency is what’s gonna keep this little area kind of going. Yeah.

Because a lot of these kids probably aren’t gonna get out of this area, ya know. Because you even grew up over here [to James].

J: Mhm [affirm].

V: And ya know, we’re right back, so ya know. And you want your… and twenty years is a long time, and that’s enough for the next generation to come in, ya know? So our kids can say, hey I went to the South East Youth Association, now my kid goes to the South East Youth Association. So I, I like their consistency.

P: [22:44] [to James] Were you here when the South East Youth Association was? Did you live in the southeast?

J: I actually I was like right on the border of the Northeast and Southeast.

P: Okay.

J: And I went to Central so I passed it up all the time, ya know. So yeah, but growing up I wasn’t aware of the South East Youth Association. That’s probably been too long. Ya know ’96 I was about to graduate high school so ya know. But as far as them being involved in the community, I didn’t find out about it until our kids were in [mumble].
P: That makes sense, they don’t really anything for parents.

J: Right.

V: Yeah, I remember the first time we came over, they were having a block party.

J: Yeah.

V: We were like, what the heck is this.

J: Yeah, what’s goin on here?

P: So did you kind of like just stumble…

V: Yeah we stumbled on it, and fell in love. Yeah.

P: How long ago was that?

V: That would have been three years ago [J confirm].

P: Cool…. I think that’s really all of the questions I had. This has been like super helpful.

V: Oh okay.

J: Excellent.

P: [24:00] Is there anything else you would like to share, or say about the South East Youth Association?

V: I don’t. I’ve just…I’ve been really lucky to be a part of it. I was even at their, one of the banquets they had last year and my daughter performed. They did a little praise dance and uh, just seeing everybody come together. They had a community dinner last Sunday and I wish I could have gone. They raised like 3 thousand dollars.


V: Yeah, so the people love it, and ya know the people, because the people at the banquet aren’t' people from this area, they wanna see these kids do better. They want to help, and I think that’s just awesome, that ya know these kids are not on their own. And I think that’s the way a lot of
them feel like I’m in this by myself if I can’t do it, then it’s not gonna get done. But there are
people out there who really want you to succeed. Yeah.
P: Cool, great. Thank you guys so much for your time
V & J: No problem.
J: Glad we could help.
Interview Transcript: Murphy, Lindsay

Date: January 19, 2016

Lindsay: Well that seems ridiculous, but I almost put like just the 20 and then was done. [She is signing the consent form]. Oh Mercy.

Principal Investigator: [00:44] I think these are basically exactly what I sent you. I guess I’ll start with something that I didn’t think of before I had said in that email, just kind of like the four words that you came up with.

L: Yeah.

P: Cuz, like Dan had told me about that, whenever that was that I hung out with him. If you could just start by talking about that because I think that’s a good concept and a cool thing.

L: Yeah, yeah.

P: I’d love to hear more about it.

L: Well essentially the four words were explore, co-create, serve and become, and essentially we wanted to encompass our programs, but also have words that our kids were attaching to like, they could be explorers of nature and science and possibility and art and things that they would be identifying with and know that they are positive words but words that kind of cast them into doing something really cool. So we have this cool idea for art for them to do like, I don’t know, get little toilet paper rolls and make binoculars out of them and then check out the world just through those, you know. The second graders will probably adapt to that the most they’ll think that’s really cool. The fifth graders will definitely not be able to do that (laugh) but second graders ya know, just being able to have the binoculars and being able to walk around outside and see things a little bit differently it’s just kind of the purposeful, like, I’m gonna pause and
take an extra look at what’s around me in creation and what’s happening in God and all of that.

So that’s explore. Co-create was based off of something that Dan and I had talked about and he had shared in Genesis that like Adam was invited by God to name the animals. So what would it look like as individuals and people if we were invited into spaces where we could co-create with God? Something good and beautiful that would impact the world around us and make it more, ya know, essentially beautiful and good. And letting the kids know that they are capable of creating, but also they’re full of talents and giftedness and so much possibility that’s just waiting to be unwrapped and our programs are able to in some ways hopefully help them unwrap that and process those good gifts. Essentially understand that God’s the one who placed those inside them and life and people and ya know programs around them are gonna be able what to like really, like… I don’t know, I guess instill and craft and edify those gifts. That’s co-create. Serve is just that they would be servants of the world around them and know that, no circumstance no definition of where they’re living or how they live or their skin color or race or religion should change the fact that they have the possibility of making good things and making good relationships and being blessings in their community. So that’s serve. And then become… it is linked a lot to our program where the kids can do career awareness stuff and talk with adults in different professions and create their own businesses and it’s pretty detailed. Dan has like a five peer thing. But become with like the whole broad theme is that they are flourishing into something. And then there’s going to be a tree up here that has books related to careers and related to cool things that kids are doing around the world. So I wanna find like those books that this twelve year old created a sock drive and gave it to a homeless shelter and ya know 30 men were able to get extra socks that day or something. Like I wanna find the books on kids doing things now, but also of kids becoming really cool things no matter their circumstance or
background race or religion. That they would be intentional about their education now and know that they could become really anything they set their hearts and minds to.

P: Yeah.

L: So.

P: Cool.

L: Yeah.

P: So those are like definitely rooted in Christianity. Do you think parents and even the students know that, or do they feel like they have to be a Christian to embrace these values and stuff?

L: So, up until this year the afterschool program didn’t really have any sort of, I mean, most of the staff from the South East Youth Association that was placed in both sites were Christians. And the volunteers were, had Christian backgrounds but they, they weren’t advised in any sort of way but they also, I mean in a sense they were discouraged about having open conversations.

Inside the school buildings we didn’t push that. I think a lot of our parents picked up on that, just in relationships and the attitudes and the ways that we responded to kids when they were making bad decisions or when they were making good decisions. So I think that filtered into it a lot. Some of our parents really identified with that, and said ooh that’s something I want my child to be a part of, so whatever program you start I want to make sure they are a part of that. Some I don’t think it really mattered to them one way or another. I think they were aware of the fact that the South East Youth Association was a Christian organization but because we weren’t pushing it too much in the afterschool program at all it wasn’t. Ya know we had a few Muslim kids in the program at Washington and we had great relationships with their family, and besides the fact that like no art projects or something during Christmas time or Easter that were related to Jesus or like even the idea of Santa or something like that she didn’t want that. So besides just altering the
program just a little bit we had strong relationships with people who weren’t Christians too. But our ministry clubs are very much so a part of that, and all of the kids in our programs, like in our afterschool program are invited to be a part of those. So as we’re creating a space here, in the afterschool program here that was a staple of what the program’s gonna look like. We knew we were going to have the worship component in there, and so every interview with parents we have said there is going to be a worship component. And they’ve seen the words, highly relational, Christian education, unwrapping giftedness, and service, like written down on a paper and it has like the breakdown of what each of those things are and so I think once they’re invited in to this space maybe we can even explain what these words mean, because I don’t want anybody to feel like they’re unaware of what it is, but I also, especially the word co-create that one might throw people for a loop. But the other ones are, I think, yeah. The theme of what we want the kids to pick up on is deeper and rooted and ya know pretty related back to scripture but yeah, I don’t know if that’s helpful.

P: Yeah.

L: Okay.

P: That’s cool, that’s not a question I had, sometimes I just ask questions because I’m curious.

L: No, yeah that’s good.

P: [08:45] Sweet, so I guess to kind of step back to the general organization kind of view. Could you like, just describe South East Youth Association. Like how would you describe South East Youth Association if you were going to tell someone that had no idea about it? I think it’s, it’s not complex, but it’s a layered organization. But I’m sure you have to talk to people a lot of times who have no idea what South East Youth Association is, so how do you go about doing that?
L: Yeah, I think that the most easy way to describe it, because it is layered and it is complex and it depends on like your audience. Basically anybody I’d say that it’s not your typical at-risk youth center. Typically, all the kids in our neighborhood are labeled that, and most of them receive government aid as far as food and school lunches and transportation and even housing. We have really come into the philosophy that our kids are not going to be labeled at-risk with that sort of understanding. We want to look at it as, they’re only at-risk of changing the world if we give them the right tools. Like if we’re able to partner with them and provide programs that help them understand how unique and gifted and talented they are. So we do have, like we are in a neighborhood where there are some different forms of poverty and struggle, but the kids are incredible and amazing and they’re kids. And they’re kids just like they’re kids in Hillview School District or Ford Township or Dorrington or Moyer Heights or anywhere locally. So we offer after-school programs but we also offer ministry clubs and we’re very family related. I don’t think Christ did anything without first establishing some sort of relationships with a person. And everything the South East Youth Association does is just very much so relational. Most of what the programs are have been crafted out of what parents or Little City Church’s congregation, or the kids have wanted to see in the neighborhood. And then those have developed as the result of those people kind of offering that up or asking about it. I would say its very family oriented but it’s not in any ways like we are replacements for the family that the kids have. It’s very much so that we just want to be a resource to families and parents as, it’s a very together feeling and a communal we’re in this together sort of feel. Where most of the staff are living in the neighborhood, and have had more than like a four year relationship with most of the families.

P: [12:05] So you feel very much a part of the community?
L: Yeah, in so many ways. I’ve been here for 3 and a half years in this position, and another year as an intern when I was at Midville Christian University still. I definitely felt a change in my relationship with the kids and also families when I moved to the neighborhood, which happened two and a half years ago. I was living in like Dorrington or Ford Township and I felt like very ridiculous swinging by Starbucks on my way and then coming here, and just seeing what’s up and plugging in that way. So my whole relationship to them changed when I moved right next door to the South East Youth Association, and the kids saw me and I was a part, like they were a part of my lives when I walked my dog and when I got the groceries out of my car and when we went to church, or when anything was happening and it became more daily life and not like strangers passing by or that girl that works at that center over there. It became, oh we’re all plugged into this.

P: [13:18] You would say that the students felt that?

L: Oh yeah, to them I’ll never move. I’ll never move and I’ll never get married and I’ll never have my own children, because we’re family and this is what it looks like. And if those conversations come up at all, then, it only comes up when they see me mowing my lawn. And they’re like, Miss Lindsay you need a husband, and I always have to crack up and say, why would I need a husband for something I’m able to do myself? Like gender roles don’t always have to be specifically like, ya know, the man is outside working and the woman’s inside. The kids will like talk to me a little bit about that, but then they’re like, well if you do marry someone he has to be okay with living here. And I’m like, Okay deal. And I don’t want to make promises, I don’t know what the next five ten years is gonna look like, but for the present moment we’re happy like where we’re at and… yeah. It’s a very family feel. One time we were eating spaghetti on my porch and we were, it was me and a couple of the kids, and I started like laughing about
something and I’m like, it just had this like almost like holy-esque moment where we were just like in-sync and the kids were having fun and ya know the neighbors were walking past and it was a warm summer night and we’re just eating pasta on the porch and just being fun. And so like, and I said something to them like, Wow it really feels like, I don’t know, we just feel like family right now. And the girls started busting up laughing, the high schoolers, and I’m like what’s so funny, and they’re like, Miss Lindsay you’re just now realizing this? And it just takes me back that they’ve established this in their minds like a really long time ago and it might have been when I moved into the neighborhood or it might have been before then. It’s a very, like that communal based togetherness.

P: Beautiful.

L: Yeah, yeah, it gets me all emotional. I mean Dan talks about the feels, and it’s a very real thing. And I think it’s essentially because I’m feeling oriented, but there are just these really beautiful holy moments that, I call them holy moments because they’re the ways that I see like personally in my own faith walk like God the most and its through relationships and being with other people and I think Dan typically says that 98% of the way that most people experience the holy spirit is like people with, ya know like, Jesus, the Holy Spirit with flesh on. So other people and relating to other people and making those connections and… yeah.

P: Awesome.

L: Yeah.

P: [16:15] That’s exciting on a lot of different levels. So to move to this kind of transition piece with the South East Youth Association, I don’t know how to begin asking…

L: Yeah, the blah.
P: Yeah. I guess could you kind of just walk me through the situation from, I heard it from like a lot of different points of view from Dan to the people that volunteer to parents. But you’re in the school, you were in the school much more than Dan was so you have a completely, not completely different, but definitely a different vantage point on that. Yeah, and I haven’t talked to anybody at Washington so that’d be great to kind of hear. I guess maybe start what do you see as the reasons for the transition?

L: Yeah. I don’t think if it was up just to the South East Youth Association to make the decision to transition into doing the programming here again, I don’t think we would have gotten to this on our own. I think that as a stand-alone option would have been something we wouldn’t have considered for… I don’t know fifteen years twenty years. We valued being a part of the school buildings and being an intricate part of the lives of the teachers and the principals and relating. For me I was at Lincoln for a few years, and then running the program at Washington…. You just get an inside view of the whole like structure and how the kids, like where they’re spending 90% of their day. You get the inside look of how the community worker in Washington is relating to them and how the principals are responding to their behavior and how the teachers, like the solutions for some of the ways they’re struggling academically. And so for us to be invited into the school district, or into the school buildings ten or eleven years ago, it was just a really cool thing. And we really valued that. I think, the way that I would best describe it is, there were a series of… I wouldn’t even say miscommunications, there were a series of events with City Funding that started, I would say back in the spring of last year. I think we were feeling some restrictions in the sense that in the last couple of years the kids had always come to the South East Youth Association, they’d come on a weekly basis every grade from Lincoln would come over at least once. And within the last two or three years they weren’t allowed to come at
all. So we were doing all programming completely out of the school buildings. When we first
started it was a very, hey we want you to not lose your identity and who you are as a site and as
like an organization if you just come to the building. So we want you to be able to include all the
aspects that made the program here in one small little building successful, so run it the way
you’d like. And that was kind of the overall unwritten, or yeah I’d say unwritten word. And we
did, kids were coming here all the time, parents were picking up kids here, kids were invited to
be a part of the ministry clubs and it was a really kind of fluid motion. When all of that was
being restricted there was like that kind of uneasiness that we’re losing some of our ability to run
the program the way that we had wanted to and hoped to. Then in the spring of 2015 we… had a
couple of interactions that were like tense and awkward, and then going into the summer other
things were being cut out. There was talk that like the snacks that we get from Midville mission
weren’t going to be able to be offered anymore because, why would South East Youth
Association kids be able to go home with their bellies full while there are other kids in the school
district that were going home hungry? And that was something that was directly quoted to me in
a meeting with City Funding. So Amy had said, why is it that your kids get to go home with their
bellies full while there are all these other kids hungry? And my whole approach was, if we can’t
just do a little and if everyone can’t just do a little then we’re not going to make anything better.
So in our minds being able to offer snacks that at least kept them full until 530 when they were
going picked up by their families, would at least keep them not focusing on the fact that they’re
hungry and they could focus on the fact that, hey I really want to master my times tables, or I
really want to master this during academics or this during, or be present during yoga or whatever
they were doing in the program that day. And if you’re dealing with hungry kids it just doesn’t
happen as well they get cranky and are frustrated, which is anybody. That was happening….then
there was an issue of we had set up a garden program over at Washington where the kids were going to Jefferson road.

P: [22:06] To the Jefferson road church?

L: Mhm [affirm], they were going to Jefferson Road Church and the South East Youth Association was hiring somebody from the community who was the head gardener over at Jefferson road, his name was Courtney. And the South East Youth Association was hiring Courtney to do one on one time with each grade. So each grade would come over once a week and they were doing anything from like, hands in the dirt digging up potatoes to talking about seedlings and planting their own like pots, and taking care of their own herbs and the program was pretty cool. It was just giving the hands on approach that we had wanted, and the idea when it was run past City Funding seemed like everybody was on board about it. It was this wonderful beautiful idea and but it would be wonderful and beautiful if we would walk to the City Funding location and not Jefferson road. And Jefferson road was literally adjacent from the school so it was like half a block away. And City Funding was a little over like a mile, like a mile and a quarter something, so if you’re moving kindergartners that far it’s going to take us at least 45 minutes to get there and then 45 minutes back.

P: It’s most of the program.

L: Yeah, so yeah well it’s like the entire program. So for enrichment we just never would have even got there, it would have just been a scrap. So I received a like, cease and assist, desist, desist I think it is email that said like absolutely you’re in the wrong you’re endangering the lives of children, do not take them to Jefferson Road Church of God.

P: This is after they asked if you’d come to City Funding?

L: Mhm [affirm], so Dan had talked it over with Amy, from what I understand that, hey it’s just
really far to be moving kindergarten first and second graders over that far, like to be walking there. So we were going to look for some place locally. The principal was on board, loved it, loved that the kids were literally coming home with grocery bags full of vegetables and were taking it home to their families and showing up to their moms and dads and you’d hear them scream, I’ve got Sunday dinner. They were so pumped. Our parents were talking about cooking up the vegetables, and our parents were even posting on Facebook, we love the afterschool program it’s so cool that my kids were, got all these vegetables today in the garden. So it was a really neat program, but there was some animosity or misunderstanding where she wanted them at her site which was, and I don’t know if there would have been a gardener that we could have working with the kids or what the even site plot looked like or if it was anything in like comparison to what Jefferson road had going on, it’s like a well-oiled machine over there. So we weren’t allowed anymore to take the kids out of the school building. Now I was told by the principals just to keep doing it, and since they were the heads of what was happening in the building all programming had to go through them, and so I did for like one week because I was getting approval from them. And then I got the threatening like, you are going to be, she didn’t use the word punished, but she used the words that there were going to be… basically consequences for my behavior if I continued not listening to her. And so I had said, there needs to be a conversation between you and the principal because you’re both, your views on running this program are very different and its conflicting in the sense of, I’m being told one thing by you and I’m being told one thing by the principal who says that she has approval through Allea Stone who’s over all of afterschool programming in the district. Because there’s these mixed messages I feel like if everybody got on the same page it would be really helpful. So then when she got my email she’s like, okay okay, well since you were getting mixed voices on this there won’t be any
consequences for your behavior this time, but know that if you disagree with me, then there will
be in the future. So up until this point, I had never been, and quote “Amy’s employee,” I had
always been Dan’s, so all of the money that came in for Joanne and I’s salary went through the
South East Youth Association. [26:45] When the spring stuff happened and going into summer,
Amy told Dan, Oh there’s all these changes with the grant all these changes at state level and
they have to be on the City Funding payroll instead of on the South East Youth Associations
payroll for this. And it got communicated to Dan that essentially the real reason for this was that
she wanted to make sure that Joanne and I knew that we were her employees and not Dan’s. I
think the really hard part is, like if I would have known that starting the year then I would not
have gone back to Washington doing programming. Dan’s somebody that I really trust and I trust
his world view and his framework for understanding and… his philosophy for understanding
children and kids and programming. And I think that there are a lot of people that really try to get
it, but I don’t know if City Funding is one that communicates the same language that we do. So
what drew me in, like what the South East Youth Association wanted to offer in a program
would not have been the same of what, it’s not even the same lingo that the City Funding staff is
referring or talking with. So, I would not have continued going back to Washington if that was
the case.
L: [28:05] Going in to…that situation with the garden it got really funky and fuzzy and we ended
up getting like a memorandum from Amy that said that the South East Youth Association wasn’t
able to put in any funds or volunteers, or staff, or anything into these programs. And this is like,
we received this and then we have City Funding people showing up asking the volunteers and
interns why they’re there and who they are and where they’re from. And some of them are social
work placements from Midville Christian University, some of them were volunteers from
Experience Worship Church. And since they were there with City Funding asking those questions, it didn’t stop there where they would just call Dan and say, hey who are these extra people who are at the program today? They immediately called Experience Worship Church, or Midville Christian University, or Jarabacoa University, and instead of connecting with Dan, who had in a sense subcontracted to be running these programs they just completely jumped over that. On any sort of communications management sort of feel, I’m like, what are you doing! Like these are students who have 60 hours or so that they’re going to be working with the South East Youth Association and now you are really jeopardizing the relationship that we have, the potential that we have for them to be able to continue working with kids in the future. It looks sticky, it looks bad, you’re completely irrational in your conversation. You didn’t even bring in the key elements of the people who even placed them there. Essentially, City Funding felt wronged in the sense from what I’m understanding. City Funding felt wronged in the sense of they never got a list of all 45 volunteers that were in Washington, or all the 45 volunteers that were in Lincoln. But up until this point, after working with them for about 10 years, nobody had ever asked that. Nobody had shown up to the Lincoln site and said who are these extra people. And there are like required by law visits with the over-head of the programming to stop in to the schools or into the afterschool programs, and see how things are running and who the extra people are and who the staff are, but up until that point nobody really had cared I think since they knew the South East Youth Association was involved everybody just assumed things were okay over there. So since there was this build up concern for, oh I need to start getting involved, or I want to start getting involved showing up to the site and seeing all of these extra people raised all of these questions, who are these people? Why are they here? Why are there community partners in the building? And while the principals had known about all of this and had been signing off,
or knew that there were volunteers coming in from Midville Christian University and Jarabacoa University, and were even a part of some of those conversations when they did their like first day introductions. Like this is where the programs gonna be at, I’m the site coordinator this is the principal, this is the lead teacher. When we did those introductions before the kids even met them, the principal usually was a part of those.

P: [31:30] Were there like background checks that South East Youth Association did?

L: Either the South East Youth Association would pay for the background checks, or the schools would do it as part of their field placements. So they would show up and we would either get them emailed. Jarabacoa University would sent them from their service learning director and, but the Midville Christian University ones would come with it in hand. So their first day that they were coming we had to receive it, we would open their background check, look at everything that’s on there. Or most cases nothing that’s on there and let them start with the kids. Because they’re students at a college, there are other stipulations where they have a little bit more leeway like with getting involved in like schools and stuff. I think it threw City Funding for a loop, but this was the first time they ever, like if you talk to them, oh they showed up multiple times to every single site. All the time they knew really well what was happening at every site. Last year was my first year as a site coordinator at Washington and the only time anybody came from City Funding was to drop off something that I had asked for. So if I had asked for paper plates and napkins, or stuff for the science kits then somebody would come and drop them off, but there was nobody ever saying, hey let me take a look at your programming for this week, or how many kids do you have enrolled I want to see like what the attendance is like today. There weren’t any in depth looks. Any of those conversations I usually just had with Dan. Essentially all of this is a really long way of saying, I think we were on two completely different pages and I think for up
until this point City Funding had not been really involved in the Washington or Lincoln sites. I think they were involved in Washington before the South East Youth Association took over, and then when the South East Youth Association took over, it was another site that they didn’t have to really worry about. Where other sites kids were shoved in the hallways and were running around rampant, and weren’t doing anything during the day, or during the program. Potentially the site would be shut down, where the South East Youth Association they never had to worry about that. There was a philosophy behind what we wanted kids to do and achieve and it was just very different than what other sites were coming into with. I think it’s because, and I know it’s because the South East Youth Association being a community partner, partnering with that school and with program made all the difference. The Pine Neighborhood program looked really different because Midville Mission was involved. Because the head programming person from Midville Mission was running the Pine Neighborhood program. But City Funding this was their first year of getting really involved since…no last year, since Devon left, and when he left Midville Mission, they got really involved in every aspect of programming and had all these questions and concerns, but these were never brought up to anybody up until that point. Is any of that making sense?

P: Yes.

L: Okay.

P: Yeah, I know a little bit about the Pines Neighborhood stuff. But yea, all of that is… that makes sense.

L: [34:50] And I hate to pinpoint all of this on one event, but I think we unknowingly did something that really made Amy mad last spring. And I think a lot of it has to do with this one event. I don’t know if Dan talked to you about it, but the Experience Worship Church situation?
Okay, we were, we met a group from Experience Worship Church two years ago in the fall, and they were giving out book bags at Lincoln. And we were across from them at a table just saying hi to kids and letting them know that the afterschool was starting in like two weeks or something. So all the kids and families were like, blaaaaah oh my gosh we’re so excited to see you. And then Experience Worship Church was giving out book bags and school supplies and all this. Well somebody from their staff came over and said, Oh my gosh like I’m watching you guys and you have such good relationships with the kids. Like, they started thinking through like the way they were giving in their missions in general like…

So the Experience Worship Church staff?

Yeah. So the one I was connecting with was, she is in charge of staff and leadership development and missions at the church, really wonderful. Everyone that was there was friendly and beautiful people, but they were really questioning what does it look like coming in and doing these like once a day, or once a year sort of programs without having any relationships with the people. Which I thought it was amazing, because essentially like they were asking good and big questions as a church that I think are just really valuable. And we see a lot of people that come in and are wrestling with that, and it’s neat to see, and like Dan, and even our curriculum for service learning being able to walk them through those big concepts and ideas. So she was reading a book called toxic charity at the time, I was reading the same book. She said lets meet for coffee, and we started talking about the South East Youth Association, we started talking about Southeast and like hopes. She was just wonderful, and said that, hey we really love what you are doing and I’d love to bring Bonnie down. And Bonnie, which I didn’t know at the time, was one of the co-founders of Experience Worship Church. So she came down just to check out,
talk with Dan, hear a little bit more about what we do and basically just said, we really love what
you’re doing, and Megan loves what you’re doing and we’d love to be involved in some form.
So Megan had said, which I love this, they have a staff of like 70 and there’s like 2000 people
that show up to the church every Sunday. So she had said we can come in like a freight train and
I don’t want to do that to you, so let me know specific ways that we can be helpful and let me see
if that’s something that I think we can do. So last year they helped with our affordable Christmas
where their staff helped and they purchased a couple gifts for…they didn’t purchase a couple,
they purchased gifts for the store, being able to stock the store and then coming into the spring
they have this conference called the Love is a verb conference. It’s for high school and college
students like from all over. They get tons of students coming in. She said they really wanted to
have, they wanted to highlight a local organization and they’d like it to be the South East Youth
Association so we were wondering if there was something that we could tie in to do. We decided
do something where it was called dollar to donate, or donate a dollar, and at all their merch’
tables they could, they would see like a big sign that said South East Youth Association and I
don’t know if they ended up watching the video or something but they could give a dollar at the
register. And there was talk, I don’t know if they ended up doing this, but there was talk that the
kids would then receive five dollars off whatever their merch’ order was. So if they were getting
a T-shirt that said Love is a Verb they donate a dollar and then Experience Worship Church was
giving them five dollars off as like a thank you for like donating. But gave them the option to do
that. And so I believe the conference was a Thursday, Friday, Saturday. All of this is tying in I
promise. It was a Thursday, Friday, Saturday. Come Sunday, I didn’t know this, but Megan then
was like we need to tell the congregation about this cuz this is so cool. Went to the congregation
and said, hey the South East Youth Association is doing these afterschool programs, ministry
clubs, service learning experiences. It’s really cool, it’s a local nonprofit we want to partner with. Some of our students from Love is a verb gave to the South East Youth Association we want to give you the opportunity to do this as well. City Funding’s…executive director…attends Experience Worship Church and was in the audience at the time. And immediately had the feeling, oh well what you’re describing the afterschool program that the South East Youth Association is putting on is actually my afterschool program from my grant, that I wrote. She sent a couple of letters to the staff, or to like the leadership at Experience Worship Church and said, hey I want you to know that the South East Youth Association is actually my program and the South East Youth Association is, they’re helping run it, they’re a community partner, but these are my programs, like this is my thing, and if you’re gonna give money to anybody it should be City Funding. She brought up that she had been a member of that church for a really long time, she had tithed to that church for a really long time so if anybody was receiving support in Southeast Midville it should be her. There were some conversations where the upper leadership talked, and then my contact called me and said hey what is going on here, this is really confusing. And I basically had to break down the logistics of what this grant stipulates. We are a community partner that for a long time, not on paper, was subcontracted to run these programs. Specifically Lincoln and for one year Washington. So these two programs look incredibly different than any other programs in the district. What we’re able to offer is just completely different. When enrichment in the grants says 4000 dollars is allocated for that, the South East Youth Association can meet it with another 4000. So our program can have 8 grand worth of enrichment investment in the kids. So our program because of those extra funds and because of the way the philosophy and the staff of South East Youth Association, it should look different. And it is gonna look different. So that’s something that Experience Worship Church wanted to...
be a part of, but they had kind of put off meeting with her and so she got more aggressive and
then they had a meeting with her, with Amy and there was a lot of crying and like anger on her
part and it was clearly communicated to her that, we’re partnering with the South East Youth
Association for more than just the afterschool program and so we don’t really need to continue
talking about this anymore, but any funds that we’re giving are going to the South East Youth
Association and they will not be going to City Funding. From that point it became, well since my
church gave money to you, I’m going to solicit your church for funds for my summer program.
Well Little City Church looks incredibly different than Experience Worship Church. And
dynamics wise they were going through a pastoral transition, which they still are, and Dan had
said, hey we’re like finalizing our budget at the time and we’re, we don’t have the youth pastor
filled right now, and we’re in the middle of looking for a new pastor, or a transitional pastor, and
so right now probably isn’t the time for us to be, like we’re just not capable of helping you with
this program. But the request came in anyways and the church had to say no. A couple of her
board members attended our banquet in the spring and gave some money as a gift to the South
East Youth Association and the programming that was happening. She found out that they gave,
requested that they tell her how much was given and then she sent an email to all of our board
members requesting that they match the gifts that were given, so that her organization would
benefit from the relationship as well….Those are kind of like the ways most all conversations
with this woman kind of would go. And early on I was kind of advised, I wasn’t kind of advised,
I was advised to not have any conversation alone with either her or her assistant Lori. That there
would always be a third person present, be able to say what was I guess truth. Dan had been a
part of mediations with them in the past where other organizations were actually the ones that
had, were upset or were frustrated with her and the way that she communicated or the way that
she responded to certain situations. And so I think Dan was aware that this could be a possibility, but it was never the South East Youth Association that was like targeted, I think we kind of flew under her radar, she really like us for a really long time. And then I think we got added to the list. It’s like pretty obvious. That sounds terrible to say, but it was High Street Church, and then Midville Mission was on her no go list, and they weren’t allowed to do any programming with 21st century or City Funding’s programs, and now South East Youth Association and I’m sure there are others. Within the last couple of years those were kind of the big ones. So she wouldn’t communicate for a really long time with anybody from Midville city schools, because she I don’t know why, but didn’t see the need or didn’t want to, didn’t agree with meeting with them for any reason. So there was no open communication with them, so when I was voicing these frustrations to the principal of, hey there’s just a lot of targeted conversations and I don’t know if I used the term manipulations at the time but there were a lot of like very direct voices and messages that are coming towards the South East Youth Association almost in an attacking way and towards the way that we’re running programs and if you could be involved this would be helpful. Because essentially City Funding is a community partner the way the South East Youth Association is the community partner of Midville City Schools. I mean she acts as an overhead for these funds that come in because she’s the grant writer but…yeah I think that’s kind of what encompassing what City Funding does.

L: [46:05] And I still didn’t even tell you about Washington. I’m so sorry. I got totally off track and told you about all that.

P: That’s okay. So I only have a few more minutes, I’m unfortunately running out of time. But that’s really good, that’s a lot of really good background. Dan didn’t tell me about Experience Worship Church and stuff. I think that’s…an unfortunate incident.
L: And I think the, the giving of her board members, and then the Experience Worship Church incident was really hard for her. I don’t want to say like all of this is a response out of, like some wounded place of not feeling that her work was validated or appreciated beforehand, but I think maybe she had felt for a really long time that she was doing a lot of work and wasn’t getting the credit for it like in other senses and like in other ways that she had worked in the school district. And this is me, just I guess, I should ever include a personal why in things, but I think anger is always the secondary emotion with anything and… So I don’t know. I can’t like nail down why it happened. But all of my emails or interactions with her just seemed like the response was always out of like a hurt place versus just being able to just kind of separate yourself and look at the big picture of why or how or who…the reasons behind any of these community partners were involved. If that makes sense.

P: Yeah. [47:49] So do you feel like South East Youth Association, was put into, or shoved into a corner like with the schools and stuff like they weren’t able to, I mean you weren’t able to operate how you wanted to in the schools?

L: Yeah. I think like there were, when I was at Washington….I…The South East Youth Association and I were just so much appreciated and that was communicated so much. So leaving Washington was probably one of the hardest, even professional, it doesn’t seem like it would be like that big of a deal just, but it was. In so many sense. We had built really strong relationships with these people, to say that okay we’re no longer going to continue programming in this form. I think a lot of people felt hurt in the process. Because the transition with City Funding bringing in a new coordinator and a new staff wasn’t smooth, I think the South East Youth Association was blamed a lot for that. So we ran things so differently that, City Funding was angered that it was run differently. Like in their philosophy anybody should be able to come
in at any point and run the program like without, ya know, if I was absent for any reason in the past Dan was always the one that would sub in. And there was no question about it. He got the philosophy, he got the kids, there was, ya know. When I left I had given notes to like, these are the kids you do not yell at, like you are angry and you do not yell at these kids, because it will just wound and hurt your relationship and you won’t have any relationship with them. They will not respond in this way. And I sent that like the second day after I had left or something. And those precedents were already happening, and teachers were having to intervene with kids and the new staff. And it just wasn’t positive or healthy for anyone. So I think the South East Youth Association was, like people were really hurt by the fact that that experience happened. But with us not being there, or not being in the school building things that we had protected from happening before hand, just because it’s in our DNA to not always, like we do not yell at children. It’s not respecting their humanity….Yeah I think there was a lot of push to the side and blame for that. I think there was, even when things were coming up, like issues with City Funding were starting too. I think there was a lot, oh you’re gonna be able to handle this or…um… There was a lot of even the lingo of, okay we need to do the Christian thing here and do this. And I think there is that connection because some of the upper administration in the school buildings were Christian and they felt like they could talk like that, but I think it, there’s a big difference between like somebody who has Christian beliefs and somebody who’s like dominating a conversation and bullying the other person to feel like they have no space and they have to leave. Because their programming beliefs and core values aren’t able to be communicated or met anymore. I think in both sites, specifically just because I saw Washington like so strongly, and with ya know being there and running the program there. I mean we were
celebrated and loved there, and really, everything we did. I walked in the building and every
single day it was like, we’re so glad you’re here, and yeah it’s just really different now.

P: Do you think there’s a negative stigma with the South East Youth Association now?

L: Yeah, and I think it’s really, it’s sad to see. Like I go in now, if I have to drop off something at
Washington, or like go in and say hi to somebody. Even the teachers, in the past I always had
like my own badge that would let me in the door, and so I come in and immediately the secretary
asked for my ID, and I’m like, I’ve known you for two years are you kidding me? And she was
like, I need to see your driver’s license. And I’m like ok. And then the one day I forgot my purse
here and just went over to drop something off, planning to stay like five minutes max, and she
was like I could tell, she was like seriously questioning whether or not to even let me in the
building. And I’m like, oh my gosh we’ve gone from I don’t know. We’ve gone from this level
where now we’re like potential terrorists, are you kidding me? Part of me is like, okay she’s
literally just doing her job, and she has to check every single parent that comes in, no matter if
they are a parent that has had a child in that school for three years. It just seems weird when you
used to be very much so considered part of the staff that… we had our own office in the office,
and we had our own space and communicated on a very frank and daily basis with everyone.

P: That sucks, I don’t even get questioned that much when I go over there.

L: Yeah, I mean I full blown was. I’m like okay, I’m in this, we’re in this corner. It just seems
weird. [53:20]

Closing remarks.
[In SEYA upper room. Dan is explaining new design for the room, where the ASP will be housed, and the themes for the program]

Dan: She uh, she got those the letters there for the board there on the table and, uh, she was like, Dan this is what I’m thinking of doing and then putting up…putting uh….like having a display per se under each of those words. So what we’re going to do is, uh. So like, explore is gonna go up here. [pointing to wall between the windows] And there’s gonna be twelve, uh, if you saw those white frames downstairs that sort of have that antique look. Well it’s gonna have pictures of kids exploring. [muffled speech]….explore. So like, uh, yeah so and so like those twelve photos are gonna be here. And then um, the the fronts of the doors when they walk in, it’s gonna say, it’s gonna say something like enter with a desire to learn, humility, vulnerability. I forget all the phrases that she, uh, came up with. And then um when the kids walk out the door it’ll be go out and serve, and then it’s gonna with kindness, uh uh love, I forget what all the different ya know, [mumbled speech, movement], anyway. So some of the other, uh, pieces are so we’re gonna have the explore here with the uh photos. The serve is gonna be on the doors. But become is gonna be here, and have you ever seen a tree bookshelf?

Principal Investigator: No, is that what this is?

D: Yeah, so.

P: Will there be shelves in there?

D: Yes, um [finishing painting hyphen for one of the words and looking up picture on phone]…yeah.
P: So its serve, explore, become…and co-create?
D: And co-create right. Um…so…the um…okay, so become and then the bookshelf will have um…books on vocation and and things like ya know Dr. Seuss, oh the wonderful things [jumbled speech], the wonderful places you’ll go. Something like that. Um, and it’s gonna be…yeah…so yeah that’s what the bookshelf will look like [shows PI picture on phone]
P: Wow, that’s awesome.
D: Yeah, and so it’ll be a paler green to match the tones here. But um, so then it’ll be books on vocation, on the bookshelf and then um the co-create will be over there. And there will be a larger shelf that we’ll have hopefully things that the kids have made. And maybe, I don’t know we haven’t figured it all out we have to get a feel for it. but it could be things like, um, we could hang poems or some artwork or things like that, [mumbling], but that will be sort of the area and wall space dedicated to them being these creative persons…so [sigh] and then Lindsay’s amazing idea of this verse [pointing to verse on wall that reads “I will go before you and level the mountains. I will make the rough places smooth.” Isaiah 46:2”] which I think is just…were you? You [addressing Lindsay who walked in the room] weren’t at the banquet when Gellert Wright spoke? Where he talked about…
Lindsay: No, he was there…I he did it the year before I was there.
D: Ok. He had actually done it for like four years in a row where he was the speaker. The one year he gave this talk about how the parallel between the plight of the children of Israel. He had read this article that talked about how when the Egyptians they kept forcing harder and harder um tasks on the Israelis, or the children of Israel. So they took away the straw, they took away the components but they still had to make as many bricks, and even make more bricks. And he said so when you look at the education system in the United States and the standardized testing
gets harder and harder and harder and the poverty gap gets larger and larger and larger. It’s kind
of the same scenario.

L: They were stripping of essential resources as they went along.

D: Yeah, and so that’s what I thought of when you [Lindsay] told me this verse. And so Lindsay
had this idea of this verse which I think is beautiful, and I think we need to use that in our
communication, but then this idea of putting the mountains on the climbing wall here.

P: It looks awesome.

D: Chills

L: Yeah, it’s not finished yet, but we’re just. Its gonna look like the one on the far left. [images
can be seen on SEYA Instagram page] and then these are gonna be fixed, but uh yeah.

D: I just finished the hyphen.

L: Oh great that’s good, [laughter] he’s a great multi-tasker [laughter] no it was funny because I
didn’t know if you guys were coming up here to talk and I was…

D: Oh, we’re not, I mean…

L: …stop the interview because my mom’s gonna be in here in like 10 minutes to start….. [5:19]

[Skip ahead in the recording, jokes about Lindsay’s mom, who is coming to help decorate the
upstairs room where part of ASP will take place. Making arrangements for where we will do
interview…discussion of broken printer. Lindsay left]

D: [8:35] So yeah, we’re just really pumped about. Are you familiar with Bill Strickland?

P: Nope.

D: He does work in Pittsburgh.

P: It sounds familiar, I might be familiar with his work, but not him.
D: so…yeah. So he has an organization called Manchester Bidwell. He grew up in the, I don’t know if it he would say the projects, but in a very rough part of Pittsburgh. He was flunking out of school, walked into the art room one day, guy was throwing pottery. And uh he was just like, man I want you to teach me to do that. And he said he basically skipped the rest of his classes in high school and just threw pottery all day. And gave the teachers, in the classes he was skipping pottery so that they would at least give him a passing grade [laugh]. He ended up going to University of Pittsburgh art school and he’s a trustee at the university now, but he started this huge training center in one of the worst neighborhoods of Pittsburgh, but it’s one of the most beautiful buildings you will ever see. I’ll send you a link to the video. It just might give you some backdrop for what we’re talking about. Lindsay had already come up with this sort of design idea, but then when I watched that video, I had heard of Bill and read his book earlier, but someone shhh…I was at a Leadership Mid County Class and they showed this video of a speech he gave, and it just talked about how the cure for the cancer of poverty is sunlight, beauty, good food, and fresh flowers [laugh] and so there’s this huge fountain outside of his building and when you walk in the building there’s like tens of thousands of dollars of art hanging on the walls, its beautiful tile floors. And, ya know, so he said I have welfare moms who in ten months who don’t know how to cook, in ten months from getting food stamps and ten months later they’re gourmet chefs. They are working in all these really fancy, and getting paid good money. Then he showed the training center where they make all their food. And they make all the meals for all the students in the training center every day. So everybody eats a gourmet meal and when you look at their lunch room, he’s showing pictures in this video and ya know it’s beautiful. tablecloths, it’s a beautiful dining room with huge centerpieces, and ya know, everybody there and his basic gist is like there aren’t bad kids there’s just bad environment, change the
environment you change the kid, you change the person and so, he just surrounds kids with beauty and excellence and it’s just taken off. So his goal is to have a hundred of these centers in the United States and 100 centers around the world. And the one in Cleveland just opened, so I’m looking to make a road trip up there sometime.

P: Do you know where it is?

D: I forget the name of it, I didn’t realize that one in Cleveland had opened up until he talked about it in this video. He said the kids in Cleveland when they got off the bus, they just walked the other way because they thought they got off at the wrong place the building was just so beautiful and nice. Kids just aren’t used to that sort of like, this is made for me, so when you surround them with beauty it changes even their own understandings of themselves. Somehow you inwardly raise the bar of what your expectations are for yourself because you’ve been surrounded with excellence. And so, you know, like I said, Lindsay had already had this vision, and then I listened to this talk and I was like, yes let’s embrace this, let’s go for this. So we’ve just sort of been hammering through others ways that we can add beauty to this room, and things that will challenge the students like just, give them that special inward whatever, to say this is, these resources are here for me and they’re here for me to be successful and I’m gonna raise the bar.

P: Yeah

D: So that’s when I came up with the idea for the tree bookshelf and ya know, like this idea of become. Because we hadn’t settled on the idea for the design there yet and Lindsay was like, yea that would be amazing. There’s a craftsman, a trim carpenter from our church and he’s gonna build that on Tuesday so. It’s gonna be amazing. And we’re gonna, I’m gonna talk to somebody
about redoing the snack area where the kids eat. I just think there’s something that’s gonna happen when, to the kids when you surround them with that environment.

P: Is that downstairs?

D: No that’ll be over in the fellowship hall at the church, and that needs a lot of work to get it to the sort of level of beauty [laughter] anyway.

P: All that stuff up there, how have you gone about funding all of that? And all the changes and stuff, has that been, because you haven’t had a banquet or anything in the past few weeks.

D: Right, right. Well, one we had money in our budget to support the afterschool program and so we’ve uh done that. And really everything up there represents a couple hundred dollars, it hasn’t been a huge, it’s still money, but it hasn’t been a huge investment just to give it sort of a makeover.

P: Just paint and other supplies.
D: Right. So like even the plywood, and that nice lumber to make the bookshelf, all of that came from the hardware store and they sell everything to us at their cost. It’s very, uh…lumber that should have cost 145, 140 dollars only cost us 90 something, so I mean.

P: That’s a nice discount

D: Yeah it is. So. Yeah.

P: As you’ve gone through this transition, have you had to get like the board and stuff on board with the changes and everything?

D: Well the biggest, ya know difficulty for the board was how do we transition, you know? And do we finally pull the trigger on the transition, you know? Um…once we had the MOU, and we knew that our ability to sort of be present was gonna to be drastically reduced if not, and I don’t want to say eliminated but ya know our role in the afterschool program was going to be reduced greatly. Maybe down to about 10% of what we were, so it was just like once we realized that we submitted a counter proposal and just said, hey please let us invest in the afterschool program in this way, and they said no. That’s when we decided that it was best to just pull back and …

P: So that note was from City Funding? Or from the school?

D: That was from City Funding.

P: You said before like, you see that as them wanting to put their name on things and have credit for that? [3:45]

D: You know, I don’t know that for a fact but that’s sort of the, if I could guess, I think that is part of what is going on. Because you know, part of what was communicated to me was that this was no longer a collaboration, that the South East Youth Association had turned it into a competition. And, ya know, perception’s reality so I’m sure that that’s how they feel. Ya know? But that’s not our perception…um, we’ve never tried to undercut them or to diminish what
they’ve done. So, you know, for me there was this…invitation to move into the schools eight
years ago and to expand our programs and we were clear that we weren’t gonna, we weren’t
gonna make that move unless it was still our program, and our name and they said yeah that’s no
problem. And that’s my recollection of what happened and, uh… ya know so for the first five
years, the first round of the grant that went smooth sailing. Like, there was no conflict, they just
gave us a lump sum of about 20,000 a year to fund and run our program and we added our
money to that and it went great. Then in year six the funding wasn’t renewed, and so we ran the
whole program on our own budget and then, is it okay that I’m giving the history like this? Do
you want that on here?

P: Yeah this is great. [5:34]

D: Okay, so then in year six, the 21st century money did not get renewed and so we decided, the
board made the decision, well we’re gonna run the program, it’s gonna be a little bit more bare
bones, but we’re gonna invest and we’re gonna make it work and ya know it was a very
successful year and then 21st century money got renewed and uh, for another five years. This
current year is year three of that five years, but it was at that point that we noticed that either the
state or the nonprofit was making decisions that was changing how things were running. And so,
but there was never a real clear shift from, this is your program we’re just giving you the funding
to run your program to um…to, hey this now has to be our program and, you know, everything
you do has to be through us. Because as soon as that message would have been communicated,
we would have, we would’ve uh…I don’t know if we would have stepped out, if it was done
well, but it was almost, and ya know part of, part of what was happening was the oversight from
that nonprofit. The site coordinators would say that they would get visits from the grant
supervisor maybe once a year. Like there were some years where there was no representative of
the nonprofit that even came to the building. And so they didn’t know what we were doing or how we were running. So we didn’t get any negative feedback about anything we were doing, and um… except for some things that we did that the grant coordinator would have some caution about and they weren’t sure if that was a good idea and so we had to talk through those things. So I wouldn’t say there was never any pushback, but ya know. It was just very little oversight, and that’s because they knew, they knew that things were running well and they trusted us, but then when some of these changes came through from the state but also… I think the director realized that, uh… just how much ownership we were taking in the program, I think that felt, I think they were offended by that. I think that’s where the whole thing about, hey this isn’t a collaborative anymore this is a competition like, you know you guys have sort of taken all of this help that we’ve given you and you’re not even acknowledging that we’ve helped. That just wasn’t really the case. But because of how it went the first six years, we did feel like we ran the program, and um…and so we felt like we did have a lot of ownership and so… [Ron entered van, 9:10] R: morning D: Good morning, Ron! [Ron and Dan dialogue] [9:37] D: I think that’s where that mix-up came with, ya know was this about collaboration or competition, so when people would ask us about funding I would always talk about the grant funding, um…but it was never, I’ll be honest I just didn’t have conversations like, oh this is the program that we run together, because we always hired everybody, we always organized all the enrichment programs, we organized the snacks, we organized the transportation to the South East
Youth Association. There just wasn’t, and all the staff they just, they work for the South East Youth Association. I mean the school, the school started making announcements like, kids in the South East Youth Association afterschool program report to the gym. Because we were the only organization that was ever present. Now there were meetings with principals… so everybody knew that there was some funding that came from that nonprofit, but yeah…it just was a different feel. I didn’t feel like I was being dishonest, because we listed City Funding as our partner in afterschool programming. We listed 21st century funding, had their logo and their name, put them on a back as a partner, how they contributed, ya know. Like that wasn’t it, as far as who ran the program, it was really us.

P: [11:23] So they didn’t fundraise, they wrote a grant and got funding through 21st century?
D: Yeah, well there would be times where things would come up. Like maybe, I don’t know, the one year the state made a decision, it was after the year had started I think even, but the state made the decision that the funding was not allowed, you weren’t allowed to buy any food with the funding. So all the food had to come from other sources. And so we were buying snacks and like when we’d get pizza for parent’s nights and stuff like that. So all the sites that were under this grant, all the sudden couldn’t do that anymore, and ya know, Amy raised all sorts of money for that. And she raised money for other things too. She did some United Way grants she has personal friends who are affluent and very philanthropic and they wanna share so she would fundraise other ways. But the vast majority of it would have been through grants.

P: [12:45] How long before this transition had you been thinking about the possible reshaping of like the program? I think you had said you’d considered putting more of a spiritual development part of it before.
D: Well, we’ve been over the last three years, I’d say we have been, sort of a language for how we do programming has been evolving. So we have talked about this idea of unpacking the giftedness of students, every child is a gift and blessed with unique gifts, and that the enrichment programs in our afterschool program, like they help a child unpack their giftedness. And so we’ve started using that terminology when we talk about our programming even though we didn’t use it in the programming. And then, it’s this transition though, of physically moving out of the schools that has sort of like, oh well we could do this now, like this really could be now an opportunity where we can talk more directly about why we’re having a science component with the kids, why we’re doing yoga, or dance or why do we have nurses and hairdressers and politicians come in to talk to the kids about their vocation. It’s just given us a lot more freedom to talk about the why. So I think the language in our own understanding of why we were doing what we were doing that came first and I think that had kind of reached a point that when we had to transition it was just like a natural, we can just move over here to a faith based program. Like with really no, almost no real, um… it was a very smooth move over because of where we had already been going in the years previous.

P: [15:10] How has the response been from like parents, and kids? I guess you haven’t started the actual program yet, have you?

D: Right, we start on Tuesday. Umm… response has been good. I mean the parents are excited about it. Some parents actually when they found out that the South East Youth Association was not going to be involved anymore in the school program, this was very few, but there were a couple, parents who said, well I’m removing my child from the program and I’ll wait until your program starts because I want my child to be working with a faith based program.

P: Even though there wasn’t necessarily a faith based component of the program?
D: Right.

P: Were those people that go to like Little City Church?

D: Oh, no. They were just, ya know [sigh]. There are a lot of area churches. There are 14 churches within a half mile of Little City Church.

P: Oh wow.

D: Yeah. A lot of people, we had another organization try to come in last year, they wanted to do this, oh what did she…anyway I won’t say too specific what the deal was, but it was a program that was all about character and this person, the director told me, well this is the website that we show the principals, and it all talks about character, but when we get the kids into the program that’s when we really talk to them about faith because we’ve gotta get these kids saved, you know that was her sort of statement. And I was like, we’ve gotta get these kids saved? What you think like none of the kids that live in this neighborhood go to church? Like ya know, most of the kids in our programs are involved in church. I would say a lot of them are and so, ya know faith is really important to a lot of the families that we work with. And uh…It just makes me, I know this isn’t what you were getting at [laugh] but I’ll just say it. It makes me angry that some people when they think of poor communities, they think of it as a place that Jesus isn’t here. And that ya know there isn’t any faith, and that just rubs me really raw, because there’s a lot of parents that want a program like we have because that’s important to them. So anyway…So a lot of the parents have been very excited about what we are doing.

P: [18:17] Have you had any difficulty communicating that to anybody? Like the transition?

D: No, I sat down with each of the principals of the two school buildings. I sat down with Joanne, every diagram that I’ve shown you, I show to the parents. Everybody seems to be really, like really excited about what we’re thinking of doing. So…
P: How’s the principal’s reaction?

D: It’s been pretty good. Of course they wish the transition could have happened a little smoother, but yeah ya know. I’m pretty sure there’s a little bit of hard feelings there, but you know, the program is still in the schools, it’s just that the South East Youth Association isn’t there.

[Arrive at South East Youth Association, Dan asks Ron questions]

[SEYA offices. Dan’s cubicle.]

D: [00:10] Did I talk to you about the chrome books?

P: No.

D: So, we are….. [Pulling website up on computer to show me]. So these chrome books are offered for 436 bucks, and they can serve as a regular chrome book, they can fold back on themselves to be a tablet, they’re touch screen. They can do a kiosk and they can do a stand. So the kids can use them in any format. So they’re all chrome books they’re only 436 bucks, Lenovo is gonna give us $50 off that so we can get them for 385. And the plan is that we’re gonna buy twenty. So in the academic time when the kids are done with the homework they will transition into the chrome books and doing i-Ready, but now we’ll have twenty chrome books available to use during our enrichment times as well. So if we wanna do a little class on design there’s all sorts of google apps for design and just all sorts of fun stuff, education stuff. Now we’re gonna have that kind of access, and these are like really sturdy. They have rubber corners and they’re made I forget how high you can drop ‘em, but they

P: That’s a good thing
D: Yeah, so they’re gonna last a long time. But I have a friend that works at Google, and he just
texted me to say where can someone from Google contact me about Chrome Books. So I’m
gonna see what price they give us [laughter] We’re pumped about that.

P: Maybe they’ll just make a nice donation.

D: Yeah, that’s true, maybe [laughter] we’ll see.

[skip ahead]

D: [2:30] What other questions do you have?

P: I have all the questions…. when we were pulling in you said that you sat down with like the
principals and like, most people the parents and stuff, is that like the main way you try to
communicate different things? Whether that’s new programs or events?

D: Yeah, you mean sitting down and talking?

P: Yeah, like what mediums of communication do you normally utilize?

D: I mean, it works out the best if I can get in there and talk to ’em, but I have had to
communicate even through this transition using email. Because someone told me that there’s an
email floating around saying that the South East Youth Association was trying to steal kids from
the two afterschool programs for our new one. And so I just decided that I needed to clear things
up. So I sent an email out to the director and to the coordinator at the nonprofit, and I sent it also
to both of the principals and to the person at Midville City School District who is in charge of all
of the afterschool programs and then her boss. So I sent this email to all six. And I just said… I
just was very clear about us wanting to start a program and [mumbling considering pulling up the
email] I don’t know if I even.
P: You don’t necessarily need to bring it up. You had mentioned that strategic pulling specific parents, like you didn’t broadcast.

D: Yeah.

P: Could you talk a little bit about that?

D: Yeah. So anyway, I told them that it was gonna be faith based. I said here, we are planning on starting a program, but it’s gonna have some very unique characteristics. It’s gonna be faith based, there’s gonna be an activity fee that parents are going to have to pay, all parents will have to volunteer, and it’s only gonna run four days a week. So I said, there’s sort of a, it’s not going to fit everybody, and I said, you know we’re not looking to compete with the two other programs, and I understand that there is an email…um… going around… that is sort of stating that we’re trying to steal kids, I forget how I worded it, but I said I wanted to clear up that misperception, here are the families that we are pursuing. One any students who are walking up and down our street, any kids from the neighborhood that we know are not currently enrolled in afterschool programming. That’s the first one. The second is any families who have participated in any of our summer camps or youth ministries so we are not using any role…any list of names from the two programs. I said, but there would be overlap from the summer camp with the afterschool program. And then third we are going after any parents that contact us. I said, that’s who we are contacting. I said I know that there will be some overlap, and Oh in the beginning when I gave the uniqueness I said we’re only taking ten students per grade, so it’s gonna be very small. I said so that the hit, ya know you have 120 kids between the two programs in the schools so ya know we are gonna have 40 children…um…a lot of the children that, about a third of the kids that we’ve already signed up were not in a program at all.

P: A third of the kids?
D: Mhm, but we only have 18 signed up right now. So six of ’em, I think its six, weren’t enrolled in a program right now. So we’re not, you know, those were kids that nobody was serving and then we have some kids that parents contacted us, and then other parents that were in the program but we, you know, they were in their summer camp and they love the South East Youth Association so we just told them what was going on, and they came in to ask questions and they decided to enroll. Some of the parents didn’t. Some of the parents came in for the info meetings and they listened and they’re like, ya know my child really loved being in the school program and that’s where they’re gonna stay. No problem. And we tell, and every info, every parent meeting that we had we’ve told the parents, hey look if you decide to stay in the school program that’s not a problem with us, like that’s totally your decision and we support it. We just want you to know what we’re doing and if you feel like it’s a good fit great, we’d love to have your child be a part…

P: Do you see yourself reaching that 40 student capacity?

D: I don’t know if we’ll reach it this spring. Hopefully, next year we will, but we’ll see.

P: [08:00] This is kinda going back to the transition a little bit, the way you talked about it hasn’t necessarily been like this is a break in your programming, like it’s not a huge change, but kind of like an evolution of sorts from what you were previously doing. Has that been kind of how you’ve made changes before, like a natural outgrowth? Have you changed the mission statement before?

D: No. no. I don’t know, you know, it seems like about every three to four years someone comes out with what a mission statement is and what a vision statement is and seems like they interchange and one should be longer, one should be shorter, ya know. Everybody has an opinion about it. In the past we’ve had our mission being [mission withheld to uphold anonymity] and
then our vision is this sort of explanation of what that looks like kind of a thing. Well now we’ve… now someone else came out with an idea saying that you have this slogan and then your mission sort of is what fleshes out that slogan. And so now our slogan is [slogan withheld to uphold anonymity]. Sounds like a slogan, okay? [slogan withheld to uphold anonymity]. Well the mission now is, you know, we’re gonna walk alongside the youth in our community providing safe, high quality, holistic programs that help them unpack, realize their giftedness and their ability to impact the world around them. Okay. So like that is what, yeah, so we’re now calling that our mission statement [laugh].

P: Switching things around

D: Yeah, I mean it’s it’s ya know it’s not uh it’s not dramatic, it doesn’t feel dramatic it feels like maybe if things feel a little bit more intentional now as far as like how we’re talking about things. And we’ve always, we’ve never had a list of core values that have been like super fleshed out. So that’s what we were able to do with the list I gave you.

P: [10:20] Has at any point, because you’ve been at the South East Youth Association from the beginning?

D: Yes

P: Has there been any like break in directions, like we’ve been doing this for five years and we’re just gonna change directions, has it been pretty consistent thing since the beginning?

D: When we started the afterschool program way back, someone had approached us about running an afterschool program here, they ran it for a year and a half or so and then we were like ok, huge need for this, but this is not running like well. So because it was like 1 person with like 40 kids or something like that. I mean it was crazy. So we’re like, we’re gonna take some time off but we’re gonna revisit this and we’re gonna come at it with a little bit more of a structured
approach and so that’s when we started getting some interns from Midville Christian University and from the social work department. So that, you know that in 2001 I think that’s when we started really a structured afterschool program. So that would be an example of doing that. You know, when we started the summer camp that is something that principals at the schools had been asking us for years, ya know is there anything more you can do in the summer, no it’s too expensive. But then once it clicked on how to do it, to have all the staff raise their own support, well then that it just all came together. That was a beautiful thing. And that, that honestly the summer enrichment camp has reshaped, like that was also one of the driving forces behind redoing the afterschool program, because the high staff to student ratio and the impact that made on the students, like that was something that we were very aware of. In fact the year that we ran the afterschool program on our own in between the two five year grants, that year Joanne … Joanne said, Dan I think we should really rethink how many students we let in the afterschool program. Because that summer camp is showing us how much more effective we can be if we serve fewer kids. And so that year when we had all the say so, there was no grant restrictions, we were able to lower the number of students we served, to make it more manageable. But then when this new grant came through it was all about big numbers. So even then it was like stretching us beyond what we were comfortable with. And so we just… yeah, we just really had to, there just been a number of things that have sort of all come together all at once that have led to this transition.

You know, ten students per grade, and we’re hoping to have one paid staff, well we will have one paid staff all of our staff are hired. But we’re hoping to have two volunteers per grade every day.

P: Okay.
D: So that’s three staff to student ration. 3 to 10. That’s pretty dang good.

P: That’s really great

D: Yeah. So, you know, that is gonna be…

P: Really hands on.

D: I’ve used the phrase, we’re gonna kick butt in the name of Jesus, [laugh] more than once [laugh]. Because honestly that’s what I feel it’s gonna do. I mean, honestly it’s gonna make a difference. It’s gonna be very powerful.

P: [14:22] The other question I had were about how about communicating about who the South East Youth Association is. So my one question is how would you describe the South East Youth Association to someone who had never heard of it before? I’ve been in like different situations where you’ve come to meetings, where you’ve had to cast a vision

D: Explain it, yeah. Boy that’s a good question. I don’t feel like I’ve been super intentional walking into a place, I mean that’s kinda like I meet with somebody and I kind of, I don’t know that feels like it’s a little bit. Kind of get a read on the crowd with how you talk about it I guess.

P: Do you normally like explain like a specific program, whether it’s the summer camp or the afterschool program? Depending on who you’re speaking with?

D: Yes! I mean, yeah now that would be definitely be the case. Ya know, if it’s something that is a meeting on education I don’t talk about our youth ministry stuff, but everybody knows that we’re faith based just because of our name so it’s…Even when I talk about things like, what does it mean to empower a child, what does it mean to unpack giftedness, that kind of thing, like I’ve always said, hey we’re faith based and we’re not backing away from that but for us this is what it means to be faith based. And I’ll say our mission statement is, [mission withheld to uphold anonymity], but here’s what it looks like. So when we talk about [mission withheld to uphold
anonymity], it’s about believing that every child is created by God and they’re gifted by God, and so how better to impact a child’s life with the love of Christ than explain how much God loves them and how he gifted them. So yeah, let’s unpack that. So yeah, I don’t back away from the faith stuff in a crowd, but I don’t make that like our center piece. I don’t know is that what you’re getting at?

P: [17:10] Yeah. I think the only other thing is, what do you think is the most difficult thing to communicate? Are there parts of South East Youth Association that like people just don’t get?

D: Well, you know, there is a, and there’s good reasons for this, but there’s a lot of perception out there. Like I still get introduced often like, here is Dan Phillips director of South East Youth Association they are an afterschool program in Midville [laugh]. And that’s my introduction, that’s a perception. So we’ve tried to do some work at that, at eliminating that understanding so… that we’re much more than just an afterschool program. Is the afterschool program the largest? Yes. Is that where most of our pictures come from? Yes. Is that where we build really strong relationships with the families? Yes. There’s a reason why… people capture afterschool program stories more than the other stuff. But we are hoping that this new sort of like pipeline approach will also change some of that. Now we’re talking about this thing that is… like it just brings all of our programs into one. Or under one umbrella, one goal, one mission. It just feels a whole lot more integrated.

P: Did the afterschool program kind of feel like this outside, separate arm to South East Youth Association before? Like it was attached, but reaching somewhere else?

D: Uh no, but what we did realize is that we had… so we had the afterschool program and then we had a youth ministry for elementary. Which those two were very connected, but then what happens when a student leaves fifth grade or sixth grade and goes into middle school? Now
there’s no support, no school based support for that child. Now, so the programs, the youth
ministry programs, junior high and high school they didn’t have sort of the interconnectedness
with some of the other holistic aspects of supporting a child that the elementary did and so it felt,
it felt weak. And so that’s why you would naturally focus on afterschool and this, but now with
this pipeline idea our mentors and our tutors and our youth ministry, they’re very connected with
support during the school day and it’s gonna be, it’s more like this continuum of support than it
is programs. Now it all feels like it’s one entity. So it feels really good. So I don’t really know
how it’s gonna work out communication wise, but I think it’ll be yeah I think it’ll be good. Yeah
I’m looking forward to it. Everything okay Lindsay?

[Discussion of how the pictures will be hung. 20:54]

[SEYA Office, Dan’s cubicle continued]

D: Alright, sorry that orange juice went straight down the wrong pipe.
P: That’s alright, I’ll type it all out with the coughing…. So again along the lines of
communication is there a specific group, whether its volunteers or parents, or funders or like
even staff that you have difficulty communicating with or getting on board with vision?
D: I would say last year and this year. Last year expanding to the second school, and this year
with them wanting to expand the number of students served, we felt like our ability to
communicate with volunteers was horrible. We don’t anticipate that ever being a problem again,
so. Lindsay does such a good job of just encouraging people and ya know, and just uh, just
welcoming them. That was one of the things that she just felt like, I just haven’t had time to be
with volunteers just to talk to them and get them to ya know. So yea, we’re anticipating…
because you know if you have that time to talk with volunteers and just talk about the situations
that they’re dealing with in the program, it just helps them buy in. So that’s an awesome, awesome thing.

P: So Lindsay makes an intentional effort to spend time with volunteers?

D: Well it’s just having that space even within the program experience itself to talk with them and to get to know them and to value them. That’s just something that she just does super well and pretty naturally when you have, ya know, 60 kids running around and very few staff you just don’t have time to think of that and do that. That will not be the case here…. Yeah, I think we have some work to do communicating with donors, but uh…er we’re always asking ourselves that question anyway… I think we do okay, but I’m sure there are things we could do better. I wish I knew all and could just say exactly what we need, but I don’t, I can’t.

P: [03:06] Do you see this transition making it difficult to raise as much like support as before or changing that at all?

D: No it’ll be easier. I have not had a single conversation with anyone where people did not walk away super excited about what we’re doing. So I’m not… I feel like before things felt too like, oh we can talk about afterschool program or, oh we can talk about youth ministry, or ya know, but now everything is like integrated moving forward everything sort of moves into the other. It just makes so much more sense. So yeah, no, every conversation has been really good. So I think, I think in some ways this will make communication with donors easier, and even with volunteers, just about when people want to talk about what we’re doing. I just think it’s gonna be, yeah.

P: I think that’s all I have for now

D: Okay
P: I do have like questions about, I wanted to ask you about the survey I have, and then if you had any other people. That would be helpful.

D: That’s right.

P: You had mentioned there is someone with Midville city schools that works with all the afterschool programs?

D: Yeah.

P: Do you know who that is, off the top of your head?

[Writing down names and numbers, brief chatting. 04:50]

D: [9:51] But, I’m not quite sure, I’m gonna have to think about that one some more, about whether Allea would be a good person to talk to or not. Everyone feels so, I guess I could give you that contact information, but I’ll just say that ya know they’re so distant from us I don’t really know if they know much of what’s going on. So a lot of it will be sort of just like perception, not from the ground level, but from the administration and a certain way of looking. I guess this bird’s eye view of these pieces moving around. So I can… I mean is that something you’d want?

P: Yeah that’d be helpful. Do you think like people that don’t necessarily know what’s going on have like a negative impression of South East Youth Association?

D: I don’t know… yeah… wouldn’t surprise me either way.

P: Okay.

D: I would caution you though about talking about City Funding with them, because I just don’t wanna…I just… ya know part of me, ya know Lauren Hillgrove will be safe, and she will be
very honest with you if there are some… Now our board chair person is also in administration
with Midville City Schools. Did I give you the principal’s numbers?
P: I looked them up.
D: Oh you did? Ok alright.
P: I just contacted the Lincoln principal, you said something about the Washington one.
D: Well, you know the Washington one would actually, she’s the one that it’s been a little bit
more difficult in I think the way, and I’ll just say this, specifically the way that… Lindsay left, I
think there’s some hard feelings there… Lindsay was angry, and when she left, like she’s a very
passionate person and that’s what makes her like amazing you know, but when she’s angry she’s
like really angry and… So Lindsay was not our employee and did not leave that job as a South
East Youth Association person. She left that job as an employee of City Funding, but because
she also works for the South East Youth Association anything she did in the transition there
got… my… I tried to ask this question to the principal at Washington, but I haven’t gotten a
straight answer, but… I’m pretty sure that the way she left reflected badly… or they, or people
considered it to be a South East Youth Association move. And so it was just… The reason I’m
hesitant to give you Allea’s number is I just, if City Funding would ever get wind of it, I could
just see them getting like super paranoid about us trying to build some sort of lawsuit toward,
against them. Did I tell you that I had someone, a former employee of theirs call me and it was
like two weeks after we had said we were moving out I had a former employee of hers call me
and ask if I wanted to join in litigation against City Funding. Yeah, it’s an employee who’s five
years past and… maybe four, but she’s like, yeah they’re still badgering me about from when I
lived in their center and trashing my name and I’m sick of it and I need some people to help me
sue them, and I was just like, we’re not interested like, ya know.
D: It’s like, yeah we’re angry at each other, but like I understand why Amy is, and I understand why I am, and we’re just trying to work this out, separate as peacefully as possible. I said, I don’t want to have any part. Well, would you be a character witness? Would you speak against her character? Like I do not want to be a part of anything like this. And I really wouldn’t have much to say. Ya know? Amy’s always treated us fairly and given us the money, like if we had receipts due and all that kind of stuff, like that’s never been a problem. Even when…um… like the federal money, like the pull down of money didn’t come in time, ya know Amy would always talk to us and say, look the pull down isn’t here I don’t have the money to pay you, you’re gonna have to wait. And we’re like hey that’s fine. But yeah. Other people have had huge problems. And we’ve had a huge problem with this whole transition but I think a lot of its misunderstanding and a lot of it is, ya know, sort of this was our program and then they wanted to reclaim it, or claim it and yeah. So anyway, not interested in getting into a lawsuit. And ya know, Amy has threatened litigation against some of the other nonprofits that she’s had trouble with because she felt like they were defaming her, and so I’m just like, I just don’t, I’m a little bit worried about some of these interviews. Especially with people who don’t know us very well. Getting wind back to her, that if she catches wind that we’re gathering information, I’m a little leery of… that she’ll think it’s something bad. Maybe I should just ask her? Maybe I should just tell her? We have a person who’s writing a thesis on our transition, I don’t know how you, you’ve described it to me already, but anyway.

P: I mean if you want, I can write a little blurb that you could do. I like, as I’ve talked to people I’ve tried separating myself from you guys, so that it’s not that I’m a South East Youth Association person doing this.
D: Right.

P: I’m a BGSU grad student that’s doing this. Kind of looking at, depending on the person, nonprofits kind of generally, and just this transition is the case study for it. Because that is what I’m doing.

D: Yeah.

P: Yeah.

D: Okay. I’ll have to think about that some more….yeah that would give you some negative feedback. [laugh] Like I want you to be fair, but I’m also just really worried.

D: Yeah…okay. Anyway, I would, did you email the principal at Washington, at Lincoln?

P: I emailed her…him? And I was gonna follow up with a phone call later today.

D: Okay. I would uh…I would go after the Washington principal too. [18:10]

D: [19:02] Because especially the first five years that we were in the schools, just to give you some history. I mean, there’s some perception of, I mean I know this is more about our transition. Is it about, it’s about our transition and our ability to communicate within that transition?

P: That, and kind of just the perception of who South East Youth Association is, and I would say both before and after all of that.

D: Would any of that video stuff you’ve done be helpful?

P: I might use some of it, I will use the stuff that is online, not what you have pulled off or anything

D: Oh no, I mean, oh I know what you’re saying
589 D: [to Lindsay, who just walked in] How’s it going?

590 [Talk with Lindsay about potential contacts. End at 19:55]
[Skip through discussion of type of recording device I use. Dan had begun talking and telling
story about the pledge that they are going to be using in the asp, before I recorded. He asked if I
wanted to record before he got too into the story]

Dan: [00:30] So, yeah, so this father and his wife. This husband and wife who… they were just
really upset, their son was like completely misbehaving like fighting with teachers picking on
other kids, just, and not listening ya know. Tearing up other people’s projects. I just [noises].
Causing some chaos, and they’re like man what can we do and so he wrote this pledge and so
every day on the way to school, him and his son recite this pledge together. And so, this now,
this child was like pretty young, first or second grade I think. And so it just goes through sort of
like, ya know, my teachers, and this isn’t the right wording, but basically, you know, my teachers
are there to empower me, I’m doing my homework so I can build new skills and empower
myself and I’m not gonna let any, any, um any negativity that I run in to during the day to pull
me down. And I’m not going to, like it’s just ya know all these things and it speaks to the idea of
going to college and to um, also there’s a faith component to the wording and yeah, it was just,
but and its rather lengthy I mean it takes like two minutes to go through the whole thing. But
what’s cool is that the father said in the interview, cuz when this thing went viral then like the
today show picked up the story and stuff like that. So they talked to him, and he said it was
amazing like the change in his behavior at school was almost instantaneous.

Principal Investigator: Really?
D: With him starting to recite this pledge every day on the way to school. And like there were some days where they would get closer and closer to school and his son was like, Dad we haven’t done the pledge yet! You know, and he’s like, well I wanted to, he said it was on purpose because I wanted to wait so that the words were fresh in his might right when he got out of the car like [laugh], I don’t know. It’s just kind of funny but ya know. But then the father’s been talking to the son about how, like lots of people are paying attention to this pledge and ya know how many people have watched the YouTube video and blah blah blah blah blah and the son’s like, man I’m famous? Ya know and so it and ya know he said that his son when he can remember a whole verse without being prompted like he gets all excited because he’s memorized the thing and he’s just starting to take real ownership of the idea of the pledge and that kind of thing so. Anyway, so Lindsay’s the one who found it and she sent it to me, it was like a month ago, she shot it to me and she goes, because we had talked about a pledge, venture club does a pledge and so we had talked about the idea of doing some sort of pledge and she shot this to me and she says this has everything that we had said, so we might need to tweak a few words or something like that. I’m actually gonna try and get Denise to transcribe it today. And we’re gonna start playing around with it, and so I’m hoping that Monday we roll out the pledge. I don’t think we’ll get it out today, but yeah its exciting [laugh]. But yeah it just seems to fit. Like I toyed around with like do we wanna say the words college or do we say things like, ya know, further my education or ya know whatever I don’t know. Because we have some students who are, like definitely won’t be going to college. Just because of learning disabilities and stuff like that, but ya know I don’t want to exclude them I don’t want them to feel excluded, but anyway we’re just trying to figure out how to tweak it in ways that everyone can grab it and run with it kind of thing.
P: That’s sweet how that fits in with the program, from how I understand it.

D: It fits perfectly like it’s amazing. I had started listening to it and I was actually a little bit thrown off by it the first time Lindsay sent it to me. And I kept remembering I need to listen to that whole thing and then I read the article and the story behind it. I just did that all last night and it was like, oh my gosh this is amazing [laugh].

P: I’ll have to look it up.

D: [05:05] Yeah, yeah. Did I reference the Harlem children’s zone to you? When I was talking about the pipeline idea and stuff like that?

P: I don’t think so. You might have said that at that one meeting that I came to…

D: Okay. Oh you mean with parents?

P: Yeah.

D: Okay, I don’t think that I mentioned it then, but I might have mentioned it to you, like we met at Downtown Deli way back to when we were first going through…

P: Years ago

D: [laugh] When we were first getting ready to go through the transition or whatever. I might have mentioned it to you then, I don’t know. But the Harlem’s children zone has a pipeline that starts at pre-kindergarten. It’s a hundred square blocks in Harlem.

P: Dang.

D: Yeah it’s huge, and…

P: That’s enormous.

D: Right and they have built like their schools they’ve built charter schools and so they have students in the charter schools. That’s where we got the, that’s where we got the uh. Its HCZ.org would be their website. That’s where we got the idea for the paying the kids the incentives cuz
they pay the kids their high schoolers can make like 120 bucks a week, no a month a month, based on grades, and uh uniforms, high high demand on teachers. Teachers setting the stage for the, the uh… the performance of the kids… He said if kids, if students aren’t going to college teachers get fired that’s what he said [laugh] like that’s the [laugh] he wants to create a culture in Harlem where kids grow up with members of the community walking the streets who are college graduates. Like that’s what he wants.

[Denise walked in, Dan trying to figure out what she needs to do until the end of the recording
[Ended and resumed after a few moments]

D: [00:20] So the Harlem children’s zone has, I hope it’s okay that I’m talking about this stuff.
P: Yeah.

D: Is this good? Okay. So they have several charter schools. And so the kids are there for longer days and they have health care and dental care clinics built into the schools. So as soon as a child gets sick, they go straight to the clinic. Like there’s no, like lets dilly dally around with this, if they have a tooth ache, you’re going to the dental clinic. And Eye care all that stuff. They’re growing food on the roofs of the schools. They serve 1.7 million meals a year, 97% of the food is made from scratch.
P: Dang.

D: So like it’s this incredibly holistic approach to, to creating an environment that fosters positive ya know success basically. And so they have close to a thousand college graduates now. Yeah. So all these kids that live in this 100 square block section of Harlem, he said their names go up on the board, well the kids in the charter schools anyway, the names go up on the board and they don’t come off the wall until they graduate college.
P: Dang.
D: So their preschools, the children learn French English and Spanish. They’re learning three languages in the preschool. He said, so many times we approach education with at risk kids by saying we’re gonna try and catch them up, no we’re gonna put them ahead. And so that way when they get into the mainstream they’re already ahead of the game. [laugh]

P: Dang.

D: It’s crazy, it’s absolutely crazy.

P: Has it been successful?

D: It’s been successful. I mean their budget is, it was 75 million and that was like five, six, seven years ago and it’s over 100 million now. I mean they just built a fifty thousand square foot, they call it the armory. When I look at it, it’s like the Quaker Church of God gymnasium times two or three. I mean its fifty thousand square feet and so they have parents coming in to do like Zumba classes and yoga and all that stuff. But then the kids from the charter schools can come in and use it as a community center and for recreation during the day. [02:52 Interruption]

D: [resume 03:20] So they have the armory, they have the food, they have the parenting classes, and the ya know, the little gems the preschool stuff. And yeah, the charter schools and I don’t know how they support kids in college, but they find a way to support kids while they’re in college as well. And so you can see where this is all sort of, where this is coming from [pointing at piece of paper with pipeline diagram on it]. So I’ve taken a lot of ideas like the Harlem Children’s Zone and Bill Strickland’s work in Pittsburgh. And I’m just like okay we can’t do that, but we can do this kind of thing. They just made the entire 100 square blocks of Harlem, like a Wi-Fi free, free Wi-Fi hotspot. So everybody who lives in that 100 square block section now has free internet. That’s crazy [laugh].
P: That’s ridiculous. So if you live in that community you can go to those schools for free? Is that how it works?

D: No, there’s a lottery.

P: Really?

D: Did you ever see the documentary waiting for superman?

P: No I haven’t seen it.

D: Okay. They interview… if you can watch that, that would be worth your time and it would probably give you some great insight into some other research pieces for what you’re looking to do here. But um… potentially. But it’s a lottery, so like parents sign up and they get up there with the spinney wheel and they pull the balls out and the kids whose ball gets drawn, they’re the ones that get to go to the school. But, and that’s the sad part about it, but on the other hand, I mean, but in addition to what happens in the charter schools they also provide afterschool programming in the public schools. Like they try and provide support for those things as well.

But it is intense, and it is… Now Jeffrey Canada has turned over the reigns over to, I forget what her name is, but to a new director and he’s sort of now the… I think he might be the chairman of the board and fundraising guy or something, I don’t know. But he does a lot of speaking and they’re trying to replicate a lot of what he’s doing. Now you know who Bill Strickland is?

P: Yeah, we talked about that upstairs

D: Upstairs? Okay. So, yeah if um…you know, and he’s replicating his work. He wants to do 100 sites in the states, two in every state, I saw something like that.

P: And you said he’d done a lot in Cleveland?

D: Yes, yeah. So…anyway… we’re always looking for new ideas. [laugh]

P: That’s sweet.
D: Yeah. Yeah I don’t know what other questions you had. I do appreciate the phone call yesterday [laugh] and just your thoughts.

P: [06:35] Yeah, I’m glad we talked. Yeah, as I was thinking about that and like the questions I still have. I think the main piece, I want to look at like the new program and understand that. So like I know a little bit, I think I’m gonna try to come to the, you guys have a meeting tomorrow?

D: We do, we haven’t had anyone call, we’ve had a lot of people call to say they can’t make it this weekend and that they, but so we’ve invited them to set up just one on one meetings. But that doesn’t mean someone won’t just walk in the door, so we’re gonna have to be ready. So if you wanna, you can still come you might be the only person there, we just don’t know how its gonna go.

P: Okay. Is that, of the people that have called that are interested, are they people that are already signed up for the program? Like, people that are potentially…

D: These are all donors.

P: Okay.

D: Yeah, this went out with our end of year letter to people, anyone who has like financially supported the South East Youth Association over the years they go onto our mailing list. We need to figure out….anyway. We need to, like everyone who’s done any like volunteer work for us or ya know like, you’re someone who should be on that list [laugh] I mean ….

P: I didn’t get a letter.

D: Yeah, right, you should [laugh]

P: Maybe next year

D: Yeah [laugh]. Well we also have to figure out how to do…we are, I don’t know, mail chimp is great and stinks all at the same time. It’s kind of hard to use sometimes.
P: It’s streamlined and easy to use but it’s hard to do what you want sometimes.

D: Yeah. So we need to figure out how to create a format that works for the newsletter and then we can build an email database. Anyway.

P: [08:43] So with the few questions I had. I have one more question about the transition.

D: Yeah.

P: And it was just, as you, you’ve kind of talked about this, but kind of as a questions leading into talking more about like the new program. Did you at any point like in the past few months like consider staying in, and like so you could be in the schools and have that impact, even though like your program was being compromised in a lot of ways?

D: Yeah. Well I mean, the latest correspondence we received…Yeah, okay so they sent us the MOU which had the, there were twelve points only five of them we disagreed with. So it was the one that said you can’t send home correspondence with, to parents, you can’t put any money into the program, you can’t let your interns work there, you can’t create partnerships on behalf of the program, I forget what the fifth one was, anyway. So we sent a response, we said, hey look, we really want to be here and we really want to… and so we went through point by point and just said why we want to be able to communicate with parents, why you know we want to be able to buy the science kits, we want to be able to buy the like team building, we want to pay for the daily incentives, we’ve already paid for art supplies, like and why do we want our interns to be there. Like this is just part of their development as people, and as people who want to be in ministry. And then partnerships ya know, like we’ve had that for so many years like why should, why would you ask us to sacrifice those strong partnerships that we’ve built. And so the response was, first was, I’ll consider… revising the MOU, I’ll just need to talk to my board and my lawyer, is what she said. And then, within two hours, I got another email saying, I talked to a few
of my board members and they said don’t, don’t do anything, so you will not, you are not a
partner in the grant, you are, you will not be written into the grant, you are no longer considered
a community partner.

P: So they basically said you can’t do your program anymore?
D: Well they said that we could not be a part of their program.

P: Okay.
D: So that would mean, if we would be in the schools, we would have to be running as a separate
program alongside of that program. Which seems all sorts of weird. Not saying it couldn’t be, or
couldn’t happen, but we were already at a place where we wanna be able to use our garden, we
wanna be able to use our building. The kids love our garden, and the kids love coming to the
building. And we have this developing language of communicating… God’s creating them as
gifts to the world that we can’t really use if we’re in the schools. So if we come to our building,
all three of those things are taken care of. Running alongside of the other program we could
handle the lower numbers because we could still set our own numbers then. So that would have
been okay to have been in the building. But those other three things, and I guess we could have
controlled our own snacks then too, but the other three things. We just started weighing it out,
and we’re like… it just makes more sense to be here. So… in many ways it does, I mean, when
Joanne talks about a divorce it does, it feels like that. I mean I said that to someone this morning
and they said so yeah, you guys are fighting for custody of the kids, huh? [laugh]. I’m like oh
gosh. You speak the truth [laugh] that is what it feels like, it’s just [noise of disgust].

P: [13:30] It’s a mess of a situation.

D: Yeah, so could we have been in the school, yes. But it would have been, it wouldn’t have
been ideal. So we’ve told the school principals that our science library here. The curriculums we
have, those are available for the schools during the school day, if they want them. And we have
volunteers who can’t come afterschool, but maybe they can come during the day if they would
ever need a volunteer to come and just be there with a teacher who wants to do some of these
curriculum. Like we’ll try and find volunteers who can do that. So we have 1, 2…we have five
different K’NEX education kits that can handle a whole, each one can handle a whole classroom.
And then we have an amusement park set which is like this curriculum just all about amusement
park stuff and we have an electronics kit set that can… there’s five kits and you can have 3 or 4
students working on each one, so that’s almost a classroom. And then we have, we’re gonna be
ordering…um… science kits for 2nd 3rd 4th and 5th grade, nine, er yea, nine experiments in each
in, nine kits per grade each kit can handle twenty five students. And they’re all like grade level.
According to the national science standards. So yeah we’re just excited about that, and we’re
gonna tell Lincoln and we’re gonna tell Washington, like this is what we have if you want to use
it during the school day, please do. And we’ll take care of replacing the, the, ya know the
disposables and the reason we’re buying the kits is because they have things that aren’t
disposable and we just want to have to replace the little pieces parts that are part of the ya know,
the chemical, the expendables in the chemical reactions parts or whatever. So we’ll just replace
those, but so yeah, we’re totally pumped about that. Being able to do that.
P: Yeah, that’ll be sweet.
D: So ya know the science kits are gonna be, I don’t know 4 thousand dollars… no, under three
thousand, probably around three thousand. And so when we order those… it’ll be ya know, once
we get all of that set up, hopefully, by the end of this school year we’ll be able to give a complete
listing of all our curriculum so the teachers can, so the principals can start thinking about how
they might want to implement that kind of stuff next year and use it. So we’ve told Midville City
Schools, we’ve left the building but we haven’t left the school. Like we still want to be helpful during the school day, ya know. Whenever we can.

P: Continue these partnerships.

D: Yeah. Yeah.

P: [16:57] So do you ever feel, I guess, how do you make this decision like with the new program you have about ten students per grade, how have you kind of like sorted through this decision of like quality over quantity of students? Because like you could open it up to all students in Midville…

D: Yeah.

P: …but you do have a specific Southeast focus…

D: Yes.

P: …And beyond that you have like an even, not necessarily narrow focus, but it’s very specific.

D: I mean if you look at the map of Midville, we are, a lot of people would almost not consider us to be in the southeast because we’re north of Route 30. So Route 30 is sort of this very natural barrier that divides. So even though we’re in the southeast by two blocks right? Off of Main, or one block off of Main. We, you know we started primarily by serving Lincoln students even when a lot of the students in our neighborhood were going to Washington, for some reason we’ve always had that very natural connection with Lincoln and I think it’s because of that physical barrier of route 30. I’ve never heard people talk about this as the Northeast, but we feel much more connected to the Northeast than the southeast. But now with families from Washington and Lincoln going to both schools, that has really sort of blurred those lines I guess pretty, uh…pretty much.

P: Is that because of the transition with the…
D: That the schools went through? Yeah. Now they have sister schools. It used to be Lincoln were each k-6 buildings
P: Oh, okay.
D: And then they became k-5 buildings because they moved the sixth grade into the middle schools. And this was all a progression that had been laid out way ahead of time. And so they were k-5 buildings for a year and then they became, Washington the K-2 and Lincoln the 3-5. That was why we moved into Washington actually is because we knew that half of our kids that we had been working with were moving into Washington. And so we’re like, well it just seems like a natural fit for us to be helping out at Washington too.
D: Okay, so the question of quality and quantity is big. Part of it knowing that program’s still run in the school buildings helps us make the decision to go for quality over quantity. Because we know that there is large quantity of students being served afterschool and so in some ways that frees us up to do something a little bit extra special here. But you know the big driving force has been, the success of the summer enrichment camp. And just how much, you know, how the staff talks, how ya know how the parents have talked about what camp has done for their children how the staff, their subjective sort of view of what the camp has done for the kids they’re working with and how it feels to them to be involved. And how does that feel for an afterschool pledge Denise? [20:16 interruption, Dan talking to Intern]
D: Alright. So summer enrichment camp has really helped us get away from the numbers game. And part of what we have said, especially over the last five years is, we want to grow stronger not bigger. In fact we’ve said that all along, especially when like... we’re not looking to become a city wide anything. We feel like if you go ten blocks in any direction, like we hope that 80% of the kids, our goal is that 80% of the kids coming to our programming live
within ten blocks of here. That’s our focus. So that stretches pretty far in to the Northeast side, ya
know, that goes up to Eighth Street… actually Ninth Street… yeah. We just there’s not a real big
desire for us to replicate or to… ya know, expand to become huge. We’ve always said God
blessed the YMCA and the boys and girls clubs but we’re not them. They have a place, but that’s
just not what we’re about. And I think that’s because we want to grow stronger not necessarily
bigger. So actually doing this afterschool program is gonna kill our numbers as far as like how
many people we’re serving. Yeah, so.

P: But you think you’ll see an increase in quality?

D: Mhm [affirm].
P: Ideally.
D: Yeah.

P: [23:20] Has there been like a measured academic increase since you guys have been doing
afterschool stuff?

D: Well yeah, so last school year the students in the schools that we worked with…um, they,
let’s see. We got the numbers for Lincoln, not for Washington. But for the students at Lincoln,
and that’s when we were working with just fifty students, okay? So the students at Lincoln…
their time in our program last year, they grew one and one thirds year, they showed one and one
third years growth, according to i-Ready. So the i-Ready scores. That was in math and reading.
Okay.
P: Okay.
D: Now I talked to the principal at Lincoln and just asked her like how’s that compare to the rest
of the student body and she said, I don’t have those numbers, but she said, anytime you’re above
a year’s growth its outstanding. So, ya know, we, so that meant for the students that are behind,
they have caught up a little bit. So that’s why it was so troubling for us when we found out that

the schools wanted us to double to 100, because you just can’t replicate that, especially when

you’re looking at all the volunteers that come in and stuff like that. So… I’m not, yeah. So that’s

why we resisted that so much. So we’re excited about working with smaller numbers.

P: Cool.

P: [25:10] I feel like we’ve talked about this, but my only other question is like could you tell me

about the pipeline, just the new program?

D: Yeah. So…

P: Are you tired of talking about it yet?

D: No not yet [laugh] I better not get tired of it for a couple years [laugh] One of the, so one of

the things that we’ve always realized is that we have afterschool for elementary students, we

don’t have anything like that after they leave elementary school. So we have junior high club, we

have a high school club, but how…yeah we just don’t have the kind of, sort of, intense support.

Middle schoolers and high schoolers get a lot more mobile, and get more involved in

extracurricular stuff, so that’s a challenge to do your traditional afterschool stuff with them. So

how can we create something that’s flexible, and so the idea of having mentors. Ah, ya know, I

struggle with the word mentor now actually, because this idea of mentor…uh… kind of

implies… if you’re talking about having a mentor often it implies that you don’t know how to do

something. You need a mentor to help you walk through it. So we’re looking for a new word.

Because even when you’re talking to parents about the program, and ya know I’ve used the word

mentor and then I’m thinking, does me talking to them is that like telling them that I think their

kids need more than them? Ya know [laugh] to parent? Ya know? Because that’s kind of what

mentoring’s about so. Yeah, I don’t know, I don’t know what. but we gotta come up with
something different because I’ve heard a couple times now that mentoring is starting to get sort of a paternal, sort of feel to it, and that some people are kind of put off by the use of the word mentor. So I wanna think through what’s some different language we can use. Yeah, because that actually got really uncomfortable for me at one parent meeting, I was just like, I mean no one said anything, but all of the sudden I’m realizing, oh what do they think I’m telling them about, they’re not doing a good enough job that their kid need mentors? [laugh] Ya know? That doesn’t sound good. But the idea of having these mentor tutors, or whatever we call them, that are flexible that have, ya know schedules hopefully that can… would have time to come in during the school day to work with kids. That seems like an extremely flexible approach. To have the junior high youth ministry, to have the evening homework help night or nights, and then to have one on one sessions in the school during the school day. And to have mentors covering all three of those areas up to fifteen hours a week. That seems really good. And a very flexible way to not only, and then you’re not just a part of the students’ lives at junior high club once a week, but now you’re, because okay, you know, so Denise is an intern, a youth ministry intern with us so she does two days a week in the afterschool program with elementary students and then she works with junior high club. Well there’s, its working with two different sets of students. So how that will change next year is that, someone like Denise who is interning with junior high club, they would also have several students that they would be, that she would be responsible for whoever is working in that position next year. I don’t know if she’s back or not [said loudly so Denise could hear]. [laugh]

[Denise response]

D: But so yeah, you know depending on her schedule she would be able to go into the schools and meet with the junior high kids to tutor them during the school day and so now she’s working
with the same kids who are coming to junior high club. And in inviting them to junior high club
and then also helping them at some homework help nights, and now we’re buying these chrome
books. And now the chrome books will be upstairs during the homework help nights. So the
students have access to computers after the library closes. Now those homework help nights are
also open to other middle schoolers who aren’t in the pipeline, but they’re gonna be able to
support them as an academic sort of center, once or twice a week. Once a week next year, but by
the time we get the fifth graders this year, are eighth graders then we’ll have up to six interns or
uh mentors hired and that will allow us to do two homework help nights per week. Because they
can split the shifts. Yeah, so and then the same for high school. Now the high school, ya know
Dean Thomas at the South East Community Center they’ve already said, ya know, is there any
way, ya know the South East Youth Association would want to run some sort of academic
assistance thing down there at the community center. But this idea of having interns in place, or
mentors or tutors or whatever we call them, like they will…um, they’ll be able to do the
homework help nights down there and still be in the schools to help the students.

P: Yeah, so that’ll be run down there?

D: Well, yeah that’s the idea. There’s a good chance that could work because so you have junior
high club upstairs, venture club upstairs, youth group upstairs, three different nights a week and
then you have two junior high club night er… two junior high homework help nights that’s five
nights then you have cross club ya know runs once a week, that’s six. You only have seven days
in a week you’re already really rubbing up against it. So yeah it would really make sense to
partner with a group like the South East Community Center who has a good computer lab and
has high schoolers looking for help. So, why not?
So what happens with this, [pointing to the pipeline] even now upstairs I’m thinking… boy… Denise what’s your thought if the afterschool would double as far as how loud and crazy it would get up there?

[Denise responds]

D: It would be [a lot].

[Denise responds]

D: So I’ve already started thinking ew maybe we need to cut down to eight students per grade instead of ten, so I’m actually looking at getting smaller. [laugh] But see here’s the thing, when you have a pipeline and you have this core, you have this target group okay? When it’s sort of very very defined, now you can start looking at other ways to invest. So now what does it mean to start a scholarship program, to invest here and here [pointing at pipeline graphic]? If you had, ya know thirty kids in a grade, scholarship program would be, really expensive, really expensive. Not impossible, but just really expensive. But now to talk to donors and to foundations about supporting a scholarship program for these students, that sounds feasible. Doable. I have been curious for the last couple years about ya know, this might seem crazy I don’t know. It’s different. What would it mean to find some sort of funding to give our kids like children’s multi-vitamins every day and how would that affect behavior and how would that affect academic performance. I wonder.

P: You guys had a nutrition teacher coming in, at least for the summer camp

D: In the summer camp, we did yeah.

P: Did you do that for the afterschool program at all?

D: We haven’t yet. Uh we did one year, I think it was two years ago we might have brought them in to do that. But you know just that, so there’s all those interesting types of ways now that you
can, it’s very attainable to do something like, ya know a multi-vitamin that costs ya know what
35 cents or 50 cents a day per child. It’d just be really curious to see what that would do to
behavior and to academic performance. I don’t know. But I’m pretty excited to sort of play
around with it, ya know? So now when we, if the South East Youth Association would want to
create some sort of youth development job training type of thing for high schoolers, now we
have a very small pool to work with, and to pull from. Kids that we know, kids that we’ve talked
to about work ethic and giftedness, and all these things like so now we could turn our garden into
a little bit more of a, oh how much produce can we generate from this thing and could we have
students hired to work some of the garden or work with Kevin Hanes in his gardening over here
to generate produce that they could take to, ya know the co-op that comes into Quaker Church of
God. To the farmers markets that are in town, like the downtown farmers market especially. Cuz
you know different people, one person even went and checked and they said, ya know, I talked to
the farmers, downtown farmers market and they said they would waive the fee to have a table.
And, they said if, ya know if you have kids from your neighborhood going down there and you
have some sort of like backdrop thing that talks about the South East Youth Association and that
these are the kids that are growing the crops and selling them as a business, you’ll sell lout every
single week. And so like wow, that sounds pretty cool to me. Ya know? But to do that with
something like this [pointing at the pipeline] is attainable. You could do that in a pretty, pretty
easy. Ya know, I don’t know if I should say easy, but its…
P: Much more feasible.
D: Yeah, so like these are the ways that you can start investing with some of these extras, which
I get really excited about. And there’s a ton of them that I haven’t even thought of yet. [laugh]
Ya know? Call me tomorrow. [laugh]. I’m not ready to put free Wi-Fi in this neighborhood yet.

[laugh]

P: You just gotta get someone that can foot the bill

D: Right [laugh], foot the bill.

P: You have a contact at google.

D: What’s that?

P: You have a contact at google now

D: That’s right, I’ll talk to google and get that google fiber [laugh] in the Southeast right? [laugh]

D: [37:40] And going back to some of the transition stuff, and how do we communicate with the schools. So I think making sure they know that they have open access to our library of science materials I think is gonna be really important. And I want to do some sort of event where we can invite the teachers for some, maybe we’ll provide a lunch one day for the next day they have an in-service. Or where they can come in and we can just do a little presentation on the pipeline and the dream, ya know of how we’re investing in the kids. Or we just invite teachers to stop in on a Friday or that would probably be hard for them to do, but yeah. Just finding some ways to, ya know… to just have a chance to communicate clearly what we’re trying to do. So I think once we have our, our chrome books in and we can really show the full gamut of what we’re trying to do with the program, that’ll be good. Ya know I’m kind of sad that these, we’re having these meetings on tomorrow and Saturday, and we don’t really have, we’re not really at full, full strength yet.

P: That’ll hopefully come by the fall.

D: The chrome books?

P: Well that you’ll have like everything.
D: Yeah.

P: This is…it seems kind of like dry run.

D: Yeah, it really is. You know, I’ll be honest, when we started on Tuesday I thought, oh we started way too soon we should have waited, but you know we’re settling into it already. You can already tell people are starting to settle into it, and ya know now we’re gonna start art classes next week, and the chrome books will probably be here in the next two weeks, three weeks? Three weeks at the most. And so once they’re here, the kids will have a blast with that and I want to find someone who knows how to do some design stuff, with some of the chrome apps because there’s a lot of really cool apps for education that come with google chrome and cuz uh… and these ya know it was after watching Bill Strickland’s piece about environment drives behavior and surrounding the kids with excellence. Okay, so yeah excellence would be giving every student a MacBook air. So yeah, can’t do that, but what we can do is give them, did I describe the chrome books that we’re giving them to you?

P: Mhm [affirm].

D: So these chrome books are also touch screen and they can be tablets at the same time, and like… I think that could be really cool. I think that’ll be kind of special and I think that’ll, that’ll be a big deal. Especially as the kids get older and they start ya know I don’t know how many kids have to put together power point presentations and stuff like that in fifth grade. I know in some parts of the city they do by that age, but now they’re gonna be able to. I think, I think Midville city is all Gmail, so all the students have Gmail accounts now.

P: The students even do?

D: I think with, once you get. Yeah. I know Caleb had one when he was in 7th grade. So ya know
they saved all their stuff to just their google docs. And ya know, I’d love to turn the top part of
the warehouse over there into an art studio.

P: That’d be awesome.

D: Yeah. My neighbor gave me a kiln. I don’t know if you knew that [laugh].

P: Yeah, that’s what you had said. [Interruption: 41:54]

D: [42:37] Yeah, I don’t know. Was I in mid thought or had I finished? [laugh]

P: You had just said something about the kiln.

D: The kiln, oh right.

P: Yeah, I think that’s most of the stuff. I’m hoping I don’t have to come back for too much else.

I’m talking to Megan Turner

D: Oh. Today?

P: Tomorrow.

D: Okay

P: Just to get some more, another perspective

D: Yeah. She’s something else. She’s good. She’s in my Leadership Mid County class too.

P: Okay.

D: That money. Yeah, do you wanna record? I should have said that before I started talking. But
you know like if we have a surplus in a given year we need a sort of, I’ve sort of set up a sort of a
guidelines for our fundraising where like we, we already have like each month we set aside
money for transportation expenses and for building expenses. Like major sort of, like so the
furnace goes out in Lindsay’s house, we have a fund that, like we don’t have to go crying to our
donors saying, ahhh. Ya know we have that money. And that’s part of what we’re trying to be
fiscally responsible. A lot of donors really respect the fact that we’re doing that. You know? That
We are setting aside money so that we’re not in a tough spot if something goes wrong. And so we’re setting aside money for transportation because when we have to replace the van, ya know, we’re gonna have to replace the van. So you know, so we set aside a couple hundred for transportation and about twice that for big expenses. So what we’re… what the guidelines that I’m saying is we’re going to cap like how much we set aside. So ya know 80% of what it would cost to buy a new vehicle, like that’s where we should cap that. And I forget, I think it’s a percentage of our budget to cap the capital expenses. I can’t remember what the figure is. But then, so once those caps are hit, then that money, that monthly savings would go into like our invested funds or something like that, like long term endowment. If we have a surplus at the end of the year that money would go into there so we want to have sort of the like the money that’s in the bank ya know it’s just sort of a cash cushion that allows us to have big expenses. Well ya know the first part of the school year we were running at a deficit of over twenty thousand. It wasn’t until the end of the year giving that we’ve caught up, and so now we’ve pretty much broke even for the year. But if we wouldn’t have had the cushion we would have been done, ya know. So we have that cushion and that’s why it’s there. So we need that cash cushion, and I think we want to set that at like 3-4 months of expenses, whatever our budget would require. That’s how big the cushion should be. After that we want to have like some short term invested funds that are there to pull from and then after that we have the endowment. And that is yeah, ya know, the board seems really positive about the idea. But then putting some restrictions then on how we use that endowment money too and what we can pull down from it and all that kind of stuff. Yeah, and we’re just trying to be really thoughtful, and saying, okay donors are giving this money for a reason and it’s to make sure that it gets invested here and its invested wisely so we need to make sure that we put some, ya know, parameters in place so that… We wouldn’t have a
true endowment where you like couldn’t touch it, but donors would know that these like are the
restrictions we’re putting on it. And it would be more like a trust, but basically saying that if we
get into an emergency where all of this other stuff bottoms out, you can only pull from this so
much. But after you pull from this so much then you’ve gotta start cutting your budget, you
know. The endowment can’t, isn’t like another bank account it’s really not meant to be that.
Yeah, so we’re trying to be thoughtful [laugh] in those regards.
Sam: Alright.

Principal Investigator: Sweet, I’ll trade you, you can have that [providing him a blank copy after signing the informed consent]. Um, cool, so to keep this quick, I guess like could you I guess just start by describing your role at the afterschool program, and then your relationship with the South East Youth Association.

S: Okay. My role here as a staff?

P: Yeah, like what do you do?

S: And what I do here is I tutor the kids, and we do activities with the kids too. And uh, that’s pretty much afterschool we just kind of supervise them for their homework. Basically their homework is more important than the play stuff, or their activities. So I’m just a staff member here, and we’re working with the kids through the afterschool program which is through the South East Youth Association [laugh and smile on his face]. Yeah…

P: [laugh]

S: And uh, my relationship with the South East Youth Association is…I can start at the beginning, would you like me to start that the beginning?

P: Yeah.

S: I met Dan through the neighborhood actually, and uh…this

P: Are you from the Southeast? From the neighborhood?

S: Yeah I live like maybe a street over from the South East Youth Association. The South East Youth Association is on third, yeah so I live on Fourth Street actually. So I live in the
neighborhood, and I met him through just casually seeing him in the neighborhood and talking
and stuff. He was telling me about a job at the South East Youth Association ya know, so I told
him I was interested ya know, and he said, well it doesn’t start ’til the summer time. So I just
kind of kept on talking to him and talking to him about it and he was giving me details of what’s
going on and what you have to be doing. And the actual job to start out was going to be at the
South East Youth Association for them when they had their…what do they?
P: Summer enrichment camp?
S: Naw, not the camp they did. We had the program in the South East Youth Association where
we bring the kids from the school, we used to do that we bring them from the school and take
them to the South East Youth Association. Every grade would go a different day. So we’d go
like Monday Tuesday Thursday, like that. So the job I was gonna have was gonna be in the
South East Youth Association where you’re, the South East Youth Association you go over there
and your gonna have fun, play, ya know, socialize and stuff like that. Get ’em away from the
school and kind of change up, get ’em away from the homework and stuff. So I’ve been with the
South East Youth Association for like, mmm this is my fifth year.
P: Okay [02:12].
S: So, my relationships with them, it’s kind of like family actually. You don’t know the people
until you actually know them in the community and stuff, I mean long long time ago…it was
called the Team Center it wasn’t called the South East Youth Association. And it was in that
other building, and I used to go there as a kid. So I’ve had experience over there and I used to go
there as a kid and stuff. When it became the South East Youth Association and Dan running it I
didn’t really know, I just seen kids over there every time I’d walk by or drive by you’d see kids
over there playing. I didn’t really pay too much attention to it, it was kind of funny like, ahhh
there are kids over there playing basketball or having something, I don’t know. And I didn’t pay
attention to it until I got involved, I see all the stuff that they were doing with the kids which
turns out to be, it’s great it was a big eye opener ya know to see all these kids in your
community. Before I wasn’t paying them no attention like them wasn’t exist. And then to get to
know and you actually walk by them and see them in the store so you know you know ’em you
recognize them and it just cool and stuff. That’s kind of like how my relationship with them, like
now like I said they’re like family because, ya know you work for them, but it’s more like family
like friends and stuff. I know he’s my boss, but I don’t see him as a boss, he’s more like a friend
I just go to talk to him or speak to him, he be like, hey come on over to the house ya know we’re
grilling out in the back yard come over here ya know? So it’s just more of a friendly or family
relationship more so than work. Bottom line is here the work is like for the kids. Basically.
P: [03:40] Cool. So would you say like, I guess like how would you describe the perception from
the community, like does the community feel pretty good about having the South East Youth
Association…
S: The community loves the South East Youth Association. Because lots of kids know the South
East Youth Association, and the kids might know before their parents know like they come out
to South East Youth Association. So I work for the South East Youth Association too during the
summer time doing just summer trips and stuff. So we take them, I take them swimming take
them to the zoo, just field trips like that. So the kids know the South East Youth Association,
they may tell their parents, but the parents know the light… it’s been there. I’m gonna say when
it was called the team center, when I was there I was little, oh I don’t know I guess I gotta tell my
age now. [laugh] I’m like 53 okay? So I was, I don’t know, what, in elementary school? Yeah, I
learned to ride mini bikes there. So Dan I think he’s been at the South East Youth Association,
when they moved there I think I wanna say 17 or maybe 23 years, I'm not for sure. I wanna say 17 probably I think.

P: Its right around 20.

S: 20 it’s around 20.

P: Yeah.

S: Okay, cuz I know Kevin was the pastor was at Little City Church for like 23 years I think.

P: Okay.

S: Cuz I get them confused, cuz they’re all… kind of all interconnected ya know. So the community, now cuz I talk to parents and stuff, I do talk to parents a lot…. [school announcement, 04:47]

S: [Resume 06:10] Okay, as I was saying like parents that know about the South East Youth Association, they love the South East Youth Association. I mean, it’s a place their kids can go, they’re safe, and ya know they’re gonna be doing something they enjoy. And the kids really love coming to the South East Youth Association, and it’s been there and it’s like they do, just besides, ya know, the afterschool program, they do other things like the kids they have like Christmas time kids can come, well the parents can come there and buy toys and stuff, gifts for the kids like 50% off from the store prices and stuff, ya now. And they have a block party every year ya know. The whole streets closed off and stuff. Yeah, the South East Youth Association is known in that community, and it’s probably known around the city too I’m gonna say. People know about the South East Youth Association. Yeah. So it’s really, it’s a, I’m gonna call it a bright spot in the community. That community done went from what it used to be when I was growing up as a kid and then changed over, ya know? A lot of vacant houses you see around there now, and before you didn’t see those things. And I’d say particularly gangs, where we’re at
right here at Lincoln there’s like gangs, I don’t know which direction we’re facing, [trying to
figure out which direction we are sitting and then pointing] over on fifth street and stuff. Yeah
the South East Youth Association is known. It’s a bright spot. I don’t hear nothing negative
about the South East Youth Association matter of fact I was at the library, Washington library,
Ms. Piper who worked there, some parent was calling her asking about, well I wanna take my kid
to the South East Youth Association what are their summer programs and she didn’t know their
number and she looked at me like, Hey Sam what do y’all do in the summers? This kid is six
years old, and I’m like I think they might just make it they might need to be seven really before
we take them on trips, ya know cuz we want ’em to be potty trained and everything, and don’t
need no real help, kind of self-sufficient kid ya know [laugh]. Yeah, but just asking just today
like summer stuff? It’s winter, dead winter and she’s calling now and ya know. That tells you a
lot right there. She wants to make sure her kid can come.

P: [08:10] My other questions are with this transition, and like with the South East Youth
Association moving out of the schools. Has that affected like the community’s perception or the
school perception kind of?

S: I don’t know, because I don’t. They’re just starting their program today, just starting so I don’t
know, ya know there probably was some confusion amongst parents because maybe they were…

[Joanne came in looking for kids, interruption]

S: [08:40] Like the South East Youth Association was part of Lincoln, it was in here before.
South East Youth Association kind of had, their name was here before City Funding were so,
now I don’t think the people here really know City Funding. The name City Funding associated
with afterschool, even though they do all the school programs, they just pay the staff is what they
basically do. Where the South East Youth Association was in there actively involved in it,
bringing stuff to it. Basically they would bring their own money to it, come in here and bring programming to the afterschool program, so as far as the…ya know I don’t know what the parents are thinking I don’t know how the word got out or anything, so I don’t really know.

P: [09:26] Was the transition like communicated to you like well?

S: I knew what was going on, yeah, because I was talking to Dan, I mean lots of it was as the process was going on. Ya know kind of knew what was going on back and forth. The lady that runs City Funding came here too [laugh] so she came here like to come and sit in to, uh I have a teacher working with me like pretty much every year I had like a teacher working with me when I was working with the kids ya know. And she came in, the one teacher had to go on vacation or something or take care of her dad, so she came in to take her place and stuff so she’s kind of saying what she does with City Funding and kind of ya know, it was yeah…. I couldn’t say nothing. It was just funny because she just kind of took away a lot of the good stuff that the South East Youth Association were doing and took it away so it’s kind of the stuff that they were taking away from the kids. I didn’t like it. I didn’t want to say nothing about it ya know, I wanted to keep a positive look on, you don’t wanna spread anything to the kids, then the kids will look negative at a person and maybe I don’t even know what’s going on so ya know. I just kept it to myself ya know. But uh…I knew. So it was communicated to me well, but ya know it wasn’t a…I’d call it a non-good thing.

P: [10:40] I think my last question is just did you like consider like sticking with the South East Youth Association, like going to their program instead of staying in the school?

S: I, I…you know what, when I was talking to Dan and I didn’t get the sense that he was gonna do it now.

P: Okay.
S: I thought he was gonna like, he said next year. So when he said next year to me, I thought it meant next school year that registered in my mind.

P: Not literally next year.

S: Yeah, right after January. So after I found out that I told him I wanna stick with the South East Youth Association but I didn’t wanna do to the kids, just abandon the kids. You be with them and just be like okay bye I’m going to the South East Youth Association. You know? I wouldn’t do that, and I wouldn’t do that to my boss too. Go find another staff, I’m leaving whatever so. And I thought about its like naw I’m not gonna do that, that wouldn’t be right you know.

[loud bell 11:31]

S: Yeah, so after they said next year is actually January, I’m like yeah no. And I let Dan know and he kind of knew you’re not just gonna quit on the kids half way through the year cuz that’s, ya know part of the training you want to have kind of a relationship with the kids, and it works better if you have a relationship with the kids. And you know the parents and whatever, and it’s easier to work with the kids even if they’re having problems, it’s much easier you know?

P: Yeah.

S: I wouldn’t do that to the kids simple fact is, then you could bring in somebody new person strange and they gotta re-start over. So that’s like not helping them, they might not like them ya know. Once they get used to somebody they kind of feel comfortable with them and stuff. And I’m not gonna quit this job and have, and go somewhere else, I wouldn’t do that on any job, you know what I’m saying? Yeah. Now if they were saying next year, I would have probably still been thinking about it ya know? But in the middle of the school year, I thought that’s bad for the kids, been bad for Joanne, ya know everybody just start re-staffing and so, no wasn’t gonna do that.
Do you think, like would it have been better if the South East Youth Association would have waited until next fall to kind of like

Would it have been better for the South East Youth Association to wait until next fall to like

That’s what I think, I believe that. I think that. Matter of fact, this is confidential you’re not gonna go back and tell Dan this stuff?

Absolutely.

Ok cool, I believe it would have been much, that’s what I thought he was talking about, he kept saying next year Sam. We’re gonna do this next year so I’m thinking next school year ya know. Cuz then you’re trying to recruit kids that may be already in the program, I think that’s bad too. Like hey you’re already in the afterschool program why don’t you leave that one and come to ours this one? We’re just getting started we’re doing something new. And the ideas and stuff that he’s gonna do, I don’t know if he’s told you about any of them?

He’s told me a little bit about them like the pipeline.

Yeah the pipeline, I think that’s gonna be a good idea, to follow the kids along as they go and get older and give them an opportunity to help make some money for college and stuff, I think that’s gonna be a great idea actually. That I think will be great and stuff and uh, that all looked good, but like I said just to do it like bam we’re gonna do it in the middle of the year, I just thought that was bad. I did. Yeah.
P: Cool, well I don’t want to take up too much of your time.

S: Oh go ahead, I didn’t even hear the kids march by yet. I still got time, so if you got any more questions or if you don’t…

P: I mean, could you, I guess what would you say, like as you’ve, because you’ve talked to Dan you’ve kind of been an insider to the transition and situation what would you say like the reason for like this switch is?

S: [sigh] Okay, I got rumor mill.

P: Okay.

S: Do you want me to go through the rumor mill, ya know.

P: [laugh] I’ve been getting all sorts of rumor mill stuff.

S: Have you? If you got something from Ms. Boyer you probably got some accurate rumor mill.

P: Okay.

S: Cuz they probably talked more, he didn’t tell me this stuff, but kind of indirectly. I know he had… Okay the one teacher that works with me now is on the other City Funding ladies board.

So I have some insider information from her, but.

P: Is she the math teacher?

S: Yeah.

P: Okay.

S: Yeah, yeah. And uh, it just a bunch of crap to me. It just boils down to crap, it’s like she’s a person we all go to church with that’s on Dan’s board and she invited the person to church to one of the fundraisers that the South East Youth Association usually has. The lady that runs City Funding didn’t like that cuz they’re on her board and they’re donating money to the South East Youth Association. So supposedly she didn’t like that so that’s how stuff started, ya know, kind
of started. And then I guess Dan wanted to do some other stuff and I don’t know if she didn’t want to let him have him do it, or not, but he tried to go through the city, because the South East Youth Association they’re working with the city too, the school board and stuff. And I guess she felt like he was going over her head and she didn’t like that either so…

P: Because he’s like talking to other organizations about…

S: Organizations or just about doing stuff like going…basically the way the grant’s written I’m told, basically if you wanna do something or get something done you gotta go through her because she’s the grant writer and the head of it. But he was going around her.

P: Okay

S: I guess she didn’t like that either, so the stuff started cascading and stuff ya know. So I seen some of the emails she was sending [laugh] she was sending like you gotta stop all South East Youth Association stuff. So like before, to give you an example our snacks, the South East Youth Association got the snacks from a church organization they was in. They were getting the snacks like multiple choice snacks. Some days you get macaroni and hot dogs, ya know with hot dogs cut up in it, you might get turkey sandwich, it was nice variety the kids loved it. Burger maybe someday, a piece of chicken, whatever. Now all we get is crackers and milk [laugh] every day. Little cookie crackers whatever and milk. She’s talking ‘bout well cuz we gotta standardize it, why should Lincoln be getting all of this good stuff and all these other schools aren’t getting it. Well we been doing it for five years, what’s, I mean it was in the grant before so why’s it changing now? The only thing I can think now is, ya know, I’m gonna cut some of your stuff off. So then like all the volunteers, we had volunteers coming from Jarabacoa College and Midville College, where we regularly like the kids sometimes. Like an example, we had uh, the football team was like the mentor for the boys, so we would go on field trips we’d go out to Midville
College and watch ’em practice, we’d go to their games, get tickets to their games and they were like, the boys would be like, it would chill ’em out ya know? If you had behaviorally bad boys it was like hey well, you don’t wanna act right, ya know, when the football team come on Wednesday, like every Wednesday, so they would be good. They loved their mentors that was something that the South East Youth Association was doing. It was a connection through the schools, but no more helpers from Jarabacoa, no more helpers from Midville Christian University, because they’re coming through the South East Youth Association. So I didn’t, I didn’t really know the lady was like that. So the kid, I shouldn’t call them kids they’re adults, whatever, twenties, teenagers. So I was like talking to ’em like what school you from, Jarabacoa? I’m over there talking to her and she said, well actually I’m coming through the South East Youth Association and she said it and the lady could hear her say it [laugh] and the next day [laugh] I’m at the South East Youth Association talking to Dan and he’s like, oh just look at this email it’s like we can’t have no volunteers. He showed me an email, she sent it she heard me talking and known that it was from the South East Youth Association and she wanted to get rid of everything that has to do with South East Youth Association. Like a prime example too, we used to get the kids incentive, we’d like pay ’em for whatever grade they’re in. If they got at least a C or above with their teachers at school, they didn’t get in no trouble in school, they come ya know to the program every day and they ain’t get in no trouble here, ya know every week you get three dollars or whatever grade you’re in. She cut that, like why are you paying these kids money, they don’t need no…you know like? So she just started cutting everything, it was just ridiculous. Just like the Christmas thing, she found out, why is only South East Youth Association kids getting Christmas stuff? It should, for all kids, but it was like we’re only doing two schools Lincoln and Washington. So it’s like we can’t buy for the whole city. I mean there’s
like probably nine or ten afterschool programs throughout the city. That’s because that’s what we’re connected with. And it’s their money the South East Youth Association’s and it’s for the kids, so why are you so against that? I couldn’t understand the lady. I kinda wanted to talk to her, but she said something real shady, funny, with the kids up here one day. She said, I’m the boss of everybody, the kids was going, huh? You’re the boss of Mr. Plains? It’s like yeah and I’m his boss too [laughing]. I thought what do I got to do with this conversation? Why am I even it ya know? Like I’m just here doing my job, trying to get the kids to do their homework. But she just wanted to be me me person. She wants the spotlight and all that stuff so you know. That’s how some of this stuff, some of the stuff goes. Since Dan was getting kicked out of the afterschool program where it would be no South East Youth Association tag on it, he figured, hey might as well start my own. I mean they had theirs before, I guess they started it used to be over there on 3rd street, the afterschool program. I just thought the school was a better atmosphere for afterschool programs I don’t know how that’s gonna work. I’m go visit soon, ya know when I get some time. But they’re only gonna do it like four days a week.

P: Yeah, Monday through Thursday

S: Yeah, and I know they’ll be running like right now. Like you’re in one building I don’t wanna run to another building. I’m in this one I wanna stay in it, it’s cold, what if there’s a thunder storm out there like yeah you got snacks over at the church, its thunder storming I’m not going outside. You know so I don’t know how that’s gonna work, but like I said, the whole concept of what he’s doing though, I think is great, ya know. As far as actually caring about the kids and doing the thing for the kids, but I don’t know how its gonna work though. He was like, yeah, well Lindsay, I don’t know if you met Lindsay?

P: Mhm [affirm]
S: Come on Mr. Plains, you gotta come over with us, we want you over here [laugh] like you’ve been here the longest probably. As far as the staff I’ve probably been here the longest, I mean Ms. Boyer she’s the site coordinator she’s been here the longest. But as far as the staff members I’ve been here like five years. Yeah.

P: [20:45] Cool.

S: She was like you need to come on over. I wanted to, but I thought it wasn’t till next year. Plus you have less kids so It makes it a lot easier too when you got less kids. Ya know I got like 16 kids in a classroom. They’re gonna have like maybe 9 or 10 so it’s gonna be a lot easier to work with the kids that way. You can spend more time with ’em you know? Yep.

P: Okay.

S: Yeah, so.

P: So, Amy the City Funding lady, she was trying to, she had a say in how the South East Youth Association spent their money? Even though...

S: No she had a say in how all the afterschool programs are run, so even though South East Youth Association was in with Lincoln, she couldn’t tell them how to spend their money, but since South East Youth Association was getting recognition, but people never knew about City Funding so they would always say the South East Youth Association afterschool program. So they were saying that to like these churches too. So she goes to that, what the big church over there on?

P: Experience Worship Church.

S: Yeah, she goes to that church. So she wants Little City Church over there, that little church to donate money to her church, because she’s like, well my board members are donating to the South East Youth Association, but what does that got to do. Well I guess some of her
church...See Dan knows a lot of people, some of her church members too were like donating money to the South East Youth Association and she found out about that and it just ticked her off. I don’t know why. I’m like you’re like, in small time Midville, it’s like, you go to a mega church, that’s a little baby church you know what I’m saying? And why would you care where people donate, if I wanna donate people to you right now I can, nobody should be: Why’d you donate money to Peter, Sam? Because I wanted to, it’s my money.

P: Yeah.

S: Ya know I don’t know why she was mad [laugh] ya know. But she’s, she’s got that me thing going on.

P: Okay.

S: Yeah, so, it’s not good. And I didn’t know she was like that. And so the other lady’s her friend. She’s on her board. Now I known her from church so I’m a... I’m just talking to her because I know her like, ya know she knows my family and everything else so. I didn’t really know she was on the board, then everybody’s telling me like she’s the spy Sam, she goes back, well I guess the stuff she saw she would go back and tell her. But I said, she probably just doing it because they’re friends just talking about, not because she’s a spy. But then I was telling her some of the stuff we used to do here, and we can’t do it now and because of Amy, and she’s like, are you serious? She’s like upset, and the lady Amy had, what’s the uh....oh man I gotta remember...Spokes? You’re not from this area are you?

P: I am, I’m from Midville

S: Oh you are? So the Spokes? Something downtown?

P: What is it Annie Spokes? Something like that?
S: Amy got that, that’s her mother the teacher I have in there. That’s her mother, so she told me
she found out all this stuff she’s doing and something, she’s like, all me and my sisters and
brothers we’re gonna get that name taken down, cuz this lady’s not in the spirit of my mother.
And she’s like, she’s been tripping lately I don’t know what’s wrong with her. She was having
some stuff. I kept trying to tell the guys the janitor Henry and my boss like, they’re like, oh she’s
a spy and she tells all this, and I’m like she’s not doing it like the way y’all all thinking. It’s
probably her friend and they communicate, you know they talk or text or whatever you know.
You just say stuff, you know? What’s going on today, but um, I told them I was like, Oh no she’s
mad they’re gonna get her brother and sister on their board too and they’re gonna like, they just
haven’t decided when they’re gonna do it, but they they definitely wanna do it. They’re like
she’s not in the spirit of kids, still trying to help kids, she’s trying to just be the me, I just want
some recognition, I want people to say City Funding is doing this and Dr. Amy Umbridge and
that’s what I do and I’m doing this, and you know? I think that’s what’s going on really a lot.
P: Okay.
S: Or too, like you said too, if somebody mess with you, you kind of mess with them back too. I
mean Dan probably went over her head, and she probably didn’t like that either so you know
people do stuff like that they kind of it sets in motion.
P: It escalates the whole thing.
S: Yeah, I think that’s a lot to have to do with it. I don’t think its real technical or like, uh we
gotta stop that. It’s like we’ve been doing it for years we’ve been getting snacks why we have to
stop this year? And she would be like, because it’s written in the grant like this and this and this.
So who’s chasing looking at all the grant stuff, saying hey hey these kids over here are getting
turkey sandwiches we gotta stop that [laugh] ya know who’s doing that ya know? So I think it’s more I think those two personalities clashed is what I really think.

P: Okay.

S: Yeah.

P: [25:01] So do you think she’d be a good lady to like talk to then, to get another perspective?

S: Who? Miss Umbridge? About what?

P: Just kind of about the transition and everything.

S: No, I’m gonna tell you it’s so bad. At the Washington place, Lindsay was running the Washington she was site coordinator, she just wanted to take the kids to this garden that’s right across the street. She told her she couldn’t take the kids to the garden because the soil wasn’t inspected or something or some kind of funny. So I said, for real? I said dirt is dirt. I mean what are you talking about, right? Lindsay was like, Lindsay somehow got the principal to go along for it, and the principal’s like, yeah I think it’d be a good idea for the kids to see the garden. It was like if you take that kid to see that garden you’re fired or whatever, like a big mess went down, so Lindsay ended up quitting. So the afterschool program just quit existing, so they tried to hire some other little girl or something, she must have been her friend because she was only like 21 years old. She went there, it lasted 1 day. 1 day and it was a total disaster. So then it got so bad, I don’t know what went down, but Amy and them are not allowed to come to Washington school [laughing] no more. Ya know even though they’re paying for the program, they’re not allowed to go there. Her and her second hand lady. So I don’t know talking to her would not be…I don’t know I guess you’d get a different perspective, you might even get she might even tell you the answers to why. I mean if she tried to say by that grant thing I don’t think that’s a real answer. But you’d get a different perspective and you’d see both sides of the story
because there’s always two sides of a coin. But I don’t know if she would talk to you, I don’t
know [laugh]. Like what is this? And you already talked to those South East Youth Association
people? I don’t want to talk to you. What are you talking about? I don’t know, she might though.
I never know. That would be interesting...Dang so how could I get a reading of your paper?
P: I’ll write it all up and I can send it to you eventually once it’s done.
[Another Afterschool program employee entered the room.]
26:55
[rest of the recording talking about his interest in reading the report.]
Interview Notes: Ruff, Teresa

Date: January 28, 2016

Notes taken during phone interview with Teresa Ruff:

Teresa has been involved with the South East Youth Association going on two years. Her daughter was previously attending the SEYA after school program, while it was in the school. With the recent transition, she has stopped attending the school program, and started attending the SEYA program starting in January. She has also attended the SEYA Summer Enrichment Camp.

When asked why Teresa wanted to move her daughter to the SEYA program she said several things set their program apart. The most important things about this program are its unique values, the things that they teach the kids, and that the staff are genuine and they really care about how the kids learn. Overall, they are very family oriented in their approach to after school.

Because the program is just starting up Teresa did not have any suggestions for improvements to the program.
Interview Transcript: Turner, Megan

Date: January 22, 2016

Principal Investigator: [start at 00:25] Yeah, so how long have you guys been working with the South East Youth Association

Megan: I knew you were going to ask me that question [laugh].

P: It doesn’t have to be exact.

M: And you’re gonna quote me, so like crap [laugh]. So it must have been a couple of, I wanna say two or three years ago, I don’t know. I’d have to look for exact stuff, but two or three years ago we were at an event together where we were working, I think it was in Lincoln elementary. And we were doing some stuff, we were giving some book bags and that kind of stuff, we had partnered with the school directly, and Lindsay was there and I was familiar with what South East Youth Association did, but not super familiar, and so we were there together and we just began to talk and I realized man they’re, what they’re doing aligns so well with some of the things that Experience Worship is just sort of like our heart beat especially when it comes to serving and investing in that next generation. That was probably, I wanna say, 2 or three years ago that we just sort of started to have conversations and then we would just go out for coffee and just talk about what is South East Youth Association doing and what is Experience Worship doing and where do some of those things align? And so from there we began to just develop, just develop that relationship and friendship between the two organizations, because there’s of a lot of alignment in what we do and some of our goals, um, and so just through some of those personal conversations both with her and then even with Dan, we began to as just…I, one of my roles as the missions director is to ask the question how can we help? It’s a really cool job to
have [laugh] ya know to say, how can we help? And so in building friendships and relationships
with other organizations that kind of align with what we wanna do here, and asking that question
how can we help? We began to have conversations and so there just became opportunities and
things that they were saying, ya know, long term these are some things that we want to do and it
made sense for us to come alongside them and say well, we can’t do everything and you’re in the
trenches and we honor what you’re doing cuz it’s like incredible it’s like something that we
couldn’t do but here’s sort of how we can leverage our resources to help come alongside you in
that long term sustainable effort that you’re putting forth there.

P: [02:36] Awesome. So could you maybe speak to like some of the… I guess values or goals
that you see like you guys aligning on?

M: Sure. Yeah, sure. Like next generation is a huge component of Experience Worship church.
It’s a huge, I would say of… it’s one of our core values, our core sort of driving forces. We have
a very like thriving generational ministry from birth through college age very…um very big
focus and really important to our leadership and to our church that we invest in the next
generation. And so I feel like when I talk with Lindsay and Dan, that that is a huge part of their
heart. They’re obviously like, hey lets… they’re working with kids. They’re investing in the next
generation and one of the things that for me is so compelling with South East Youth Association
is that they’re, it’s a very holistic approach, it’s very healthy and very holistic. So in other words,
their goal isn’t just to simply say it’s all about…um, maybe preaching that gospel message. I
think that’s an important part of developing faith and giving them that insight into faith, but I
think that they’re looking more at the whole person and how to develop character, how to
develop you know that strong sense of self-worth, and value and giving back and being invested
in the community. As a young person. Their value, the language they use when they talk to the
kids, is always to value them. Always always bringing value to them as a person, and really one
of the things that stands out to me the most and another component that I think is strong here at
Experience Worship, is that we… leadership development and developing people and seeing the
gifts in people and giving them opportunity to grow in those areas and to develop that gifting.
And when I see what South East Youth Association is doing, they’re finding the gifts inside of
the kids and helping to sort of unpack those, and helping kids to discover what they’re good at
and what God’s gifted them to do and called them to do and helping them in really practical
ways so there may never be a session where they set the kids down and say here’s how you find
the gift in you, but everything they do is really strategic and intentional to help kids to sort of
discover what’s already been put on the inside of them. So in that way I think it really aligns with
sort of the heart of Experience Worship too is like leadership development and really bringing
out, encouraging people to use their gifts. One of the things we say often here is that your gifts
are best used when used to serve other people. And so I feel like in some of those ways we align
with South East Youth Association.

P: [05:08] Awesome. So would you say the South East Youth Association is a, I mean they’ve
been in the community for twenty years or so now, but being in that they identify the strengths
and the individuals there in the community and they kind of walk alongside that?
M: Yeah, yeah. I think so. I think in some conversations I’ve even had with Dan and talking
about you know, he’s very transparent about some of the issues that have been in the community
with violence or different things like that and one of the main intentions is to really redeem some
of those maybe negative attributes that have been seen in the community and really redeem them
and help kids, the kids that they touch. Here’s what I love about it so much is that Dan’s heart is
not, let’s just like blow this thing up and expand all over the county he’s like, no, we’re
specifically called to this population and we’re going to go as deep as we can go with the people
God’s put in our sphere of influence. And so they’re really focused and strategic about who their
reaching and they’re intentional to go really deep and kind of like what you said is to walk
alongside those families over a long period of time. To walk alongside them, not necessarily
doing ministry to, but ministry with and coming alongside them. Learning together, growing
together, and really building this, that strong foundation in the community like I said with some
of the things that maybe would be maybe associated negatively its finding ways to redeem those
things and to help the kids to take ownership of where they live and in a sense dissipate some of
those negative things by discovering who they are and what their role is in the community.
Which is kind of unique.

P: [06:52] Yeah, great. So what are, I guess what are some of the ways that you have partnered
with them? Is it just been through the afterschool program?

M: Yeah, so our staff at Christmas time they do, South East Youth Association does the
affordable Christmas where it’s sort of a different approach to helping families be able to afford
Christmas that maybe couldn’t afford it otherwise. So with the families they work with, they
have relationships with them and they sort of do a survey and ask them if you could buy certain
gifts, ya know what would you like to buy. They provide those to our staff actually participates
in that. They gave us about a hundred little tags at Christmas time with gifts that have been
suggested by some of the parents and then our staff buys those gifts and we give them back to
South East Youth Association and then this year actually, we sent some of our staff and interns
to help them set up the store. I know that Experience Worship’s not the only, I know that there’s
maybe two other either churches or businesses that help with those, purchasing those gifts but
then we price those gifts at like 25% of the retail so parents can come in and at a great discount
purchase, they get to purchase the gifts they get to, it sort of returns dignity to the families so as a family maybe is having a hard time at Christmas time. In our culture we buy gifts and that’s sort of what we do at Christmas time so giving them the opportunity to go in and say I wanna choose the gifts for my kids, I was able to afford them, I bought them, I worked for that money, I bought them. It might have been at a discount but I was able to provide Christmas for my family.

There’s a little station there where they can wrap the gifts, and they know what they put, they put the kids’ names on that. As opposed to you know maybe another model where somebody would purchase the gift, and wrap it, and give it to them, and the parent doesn’t even know maybe what’s in it. I know in some cases it happens where oh the exact thing on the tag couldn’t be found and so someone got something else so on Christmas morning one kid opens and gets exactly what he had asked for and another one gets like what they could… the substitute and maybe it’s just disappointing or embarrassing for the families or something like that. So I think it’s really a healthy approach to helping families take that step and own it and have some investment and purchase their gifts. So we’ve done that as a staff the last couple of years, and then our interns, we have interns every year. They’re usually college age students and they’re here maybe 30 -35 hours a week there are some classes involved here and then they’re sort of they almost run like staff [laugh] but they’re learning hands on different areas of the church like our creative department or our youth or our children’s or whatever it might be. So we’ve, this year incorporated our interns in going to South East Youth Association to serve and be a part of some community activity as well. And so far it’s been, it’s just been so great, they loved it and South East Youth Association really loves having them there. So it’s a huge learning opportunity many of our interns haven’t really taken that step to just begin to serve in the community. Maybe haven’t had the opportunity or haven’t been pushed to do that, or maybe haven’t thought of it so
it’s a great opportunity for them to get outside the four walls so to speak and really engage in a sense, engage their faith as they’re serving a community organization.

P: Awesome.

M: Yeah.

P: [09:55] So has the, were you guys involved with the afterschool program before like the transition out of the schools?

M: A little bit, just a briefly, we started at the beginning of the school year and I think that the transition happened just shortly into the school year. So we did go for a little bit and serve in the school and then just this last week we just came and we, as they kicked off their new program.

P: So, has the restructuring of that program, they’ve reshaped their mission statement a little bit. Like maybe switched it from a mission statement to a slogan and different core values, but they’re similar. Has that shaped your perception of working with them? I guess, has that changed?

M: I think…I feel like I couldn’t’ quote it to you. I couldn’t quote anything to you honestly. [laugh] Maybe if I would have studied before this interview [laugh] just kidding. Don’t quote that. [laugh] I don’t know that I could quote it, but like what I know is like it hasn’t change any my perception of them personally. Because I know the quality of people that they are, that their character and their integrity and I think that the strong relationship that we have, that personal relationship and friendship there’s a level of trust there so as they communicate to me about what sort of what direction in this transition. I know there’s probably I can imagine that there was maybe some concern. Like we might lose partnership or this might be perceived the wrong way, but for me I felt like in talking with both Dan and Lindsay throughout the transition, I felt like it was only opening the doors for something more positive. For them to do what was truly in their
heart to do, and in a little bit less limited way because in your work anytime you’re partnering
with organizations there’s compromise here or there and to fit the structure of both. So when
they’re partnering with a local school being a faith based organization there sometimes can be
limitations on what they can and can’t share or how they do some things, because they have to
serve both entities well. And so I felt like their heart and their true passion is to serve the students
and the families in that community to the best of their ability and like we said before walk
alongside them over time. Just really help them to build a strong foundation, faith being a big
component but then also understanding their self-worth and their role in serving their own
community and so I felt like none of that really changed. I felt like just the sort of the re-structure
gave them slightly more freedom to be able to really engage in that in that in their… what I think
is the core of their heart if that makes sense?

P: [12:34] Yeah, absolutely. Awesome. I’m gonna use my cheat sheet here. Make sure I’m not
forgetting anything…uh….So, as they’ve gone through this transition have they, has most of the
way they’ve communicated with you, has it been like interpersonally like one on one?

M: Yeah.

P: Okay.

M: Yeah, it really has.

P: Has that been helpful? Or effective, I guess?

M: I think so. I mean for me it’s important that…I understand there’s place for like newsletters
or memos or emails or Facebook updates or something like that, but for me it’s that relationship,
that…the strength of relationship and that foundation of like, I know Lindsay and I know Dan. I
feel like I know them from spending time together that, that, that can’t replace any kind of just
like update or something like that that’s sent through email or mass communication. I think
there’s a place for all of that, for ya know consistency and clarifying your message and all that
good stuff, but it’s been in that interpersonal that time sitting having coffee, or having chipotle or
whatever it is and talking about ya know what is, what’s the direction and what’s the heart, and
what’s the vision and understanding, I know you as a person there’s trust there and then I can see
the fruit of that in the ministry and in the organization and so. When you know, when you have
that trust, and then you also see the fruit it’s like that’s something that’s like it’s hard to shake,
so, for me the transition, and I know I’m very like I’m not in it. I’m sure it was more challenging
for them, but for me the transition is a very positive thing. I think it, like I said, it just freed them
up to be able to do what’s really on their heart to do.

P: Yeah. Awesome.

M: Yeah.

P: Cool, that’s uh really all I have. Unless there’s anything else you want to share about the…

M: I don’t think so.

P: Partnership.

M: No, we’re, I mean we’re really excited to partner with them. I feel like they’re just, it’s such a
healthy place to engage. I think it’s a great place for our interns to, you know, get their feet wet
in community, serving the community and be a part of sort of a bigger picture. And we’re just
pumped to be a part of it so…

P: Has it been difficult at all getting them on board with it?

M: No. They, our interns have been like so excited. Even, so our interns that were like at the
first, ya know, they were like, well I’m not really much into kids, I don’t know if that’s my flow
but they, I think the environment, truly the environment that the South East Youth Association
creates is so life-giving and so energized that our interns have loved it. Whenever we debrief
with them or talk about how their experience was its always positive and the thing that I’ve
noticed too, is it’s always they tell me about a specific child that they interacted with and what
that interaction looked like. And so it’s very relational which I think is simply just a reflection of
the South East Youth Associations philosophy and building that relationship and being just being
more like… they’re not conceptual they’re very relational. They like, the one matters, one
student matters and you can see that in what they do. And yeah, our interns have have loved it.
P: awesome, great.
M: okay, [laugh] turn that off [laugh]….just kidding.
Interview Transcript: Werth, Gabriella

Date: January 19, 2016

Gabriella: Wow that is fancy.

Principal Investigator: It’s for video stuff, so it comes in handy for other things.

G: Right.

P: I’m just gonna stick it there. Sweet, so how did you first hear about the South East Youth Association?

G: I actually did a service learning trip to the South East Youth Association my sophomore year.

P: Okay.

G: So, it was for an internship, I was supposed to go to the Midville Christian Home I didn’t get my second TB shot checked and they’re like well we’re gonna put you at the South East Youth Association because you screwed up, so…I got stuck there, I did it for a week, and I never left

[laugh].

P: Was it the summer program that you were there?

G: I did the…whatever it’s called, the, the…

P: Summer enrichment camp?

G: I did do that, so I did that for a year. Totally voluntary. I didn’t know we had to raise our own money so that was completely voluntary, but I loved it so yeah. And then they asked me to be a tutor in their afterschool program, and now I’m like the assistant site coordinator for it.

P: Cool.

G: Yeah.

P: [01:09] So your role when the South East Youth Association was still at Lincoln…
G: Yeah.

P: Was as the assistant site coordinator? Is that still the case?

G: I mean, I’m still the assistant site coordinator, but I feel like I really don’t do anything anymore. Like… I don’t know.

P: So yeah, so what did you used to do? What do you get to do now? What does that look like?

G: Well before it was like, when we would have the enrichment activities we would have science, we would have like art, and investment club. I would be able to go around and like check up on the kids, see what they’re doing, help Joanne out. Now it’s like, they don’t really do anything. They eat their snack. Fourth graders go in the gym for like 20 minutes, then they’re stuck in a room all day. They don’t have any enrichment anymore. So… I really don’t have to do anything because a lot of the time they’re just in the cafeteria or gym so it’s like, going back and forth between those two rooms. You know it doesn’t take a whole lot. I mainly just sit in the cafeteria with the kids that get in trouble. [laugh] That’s like my job now, that’s like all I do, so.

P: Do you just feel like you’re babysitting now?

G: Pretty much, yeah I’m like a glorified babysitter [laugh] for these kids. [2:27]

[Interruption]

P: [02:43] I don’t know how to start with these, to get into these…. So I guess could you talk a little bit about like what you maybe a little more in depth about what you got to do before like the South East Youth Association was…moved out?

G: Yeah, Joanne keeps calling it like the Divorce. Like, and that’s what it feels like too because it’s like, when the South East Youth Association was there we had…like the kids would get paid for their, for like getting their homework done and showing up every day they would get paid every week. And that was like their incentive to do well, and now they don’t have that anymore,
like we don’t have student of the day anymore, we used to do that and they would look forward to it. They used to like love going to science, because they thought it was like the coolest thing like I wonder what experiment we’re going to do today, and it was really fun. And they would have investment club which taught them how to like, kind of be like an entrepreneur, ya know, it was kind of like so you could start a business, you know? Start it young, learn how to do it, we’re teaching you how to like do math and how do like banking and all this stuff and it was really cool. And they would have art and they loved art because, we actually had a Midville Christian University student come in and teach them art so it was really cool. And then, we would have like, the South East Youth Association just brought so much, like they had….City Funding doesn’t have like I mean even when they go in the gym and they have equipment to play with its all like broken and like the basketballs and footballs and soccer balls they’re all deflated. So that’s what they get to play with, and when the South East Youth Association was there we had like good equipment for them. So when City Funding like kicked the South East Youth Association out of the program, they took everything. I mean, they even took the pencils because they’re like South East Youth Association can’t provide anything for this program. So we have nothing now, like the science teacher left and went to the South East Youth Association, which totally understandable. The investment club lady left, the only thing that they have now enrichment wise on Friday they have praise dance. But only the girls do it. So the boys have nothing, and we used to have the Midville Christian University Football team come in and like mentor the boys, ya know like they would have two football players per like a boy or something, and it was great. They loved it, and they keep asking me when ya know like, when are the football players coming back, and I’m like, I don’t even know what to tell them. Because we have nothing now. We have no volunteers, we’re not allowed to have people from Midville
Christian University come and volunteer, because students from Midville Christian University are like coming through the South East Youth Association, so we’re not allowed to have like any affiliation with the South East Youth Association at all.

P: [5:27] Would they be able to come work through City Funding?

G: If they even know what that is, yeah. And they have like this whole packet that they have to fill out for volunteering and…it just didn’t used to be so complicated. But now like, and I know with the South East Youth Association program just starting up they’re getting a lot of social work interns and they’re getting a lot of volunteers from Midville Christian University. So they’re gonna have more volunteers than they are kids. Which I mean good for them but, it’s kind of a bummer for City Funding.

P: [06:00] So you obviously decided to stay at Lincoln…

G: Yeah [laugh]

P: How is that like, [she sighed] How did you kind of like go about making the decision I guess? Because you were originally a South East Youth Association employee, then this year you were a City Funding employee?

G: Well I mean I started off volunteering with South East Youth Association, and South East Youth Association got kicked out, I want to say it was like in December we got kicked out from the City Funding program. And Lindsay actually asked me if I wanted to come and work for South East Youth Association, but those kids have like…they don’t have a lot of consistency in their lives so I wanted to like make sure I wasn’t gonna be a person who just like up and left, ya know? Like halfway through the program I didn’t want to just leave them. So I’m staying mostly for them [sigh] and for Joanne, like I don’t want to have her have to hire a whole new staff. But…it’s mostly for the kids, like I just don’t want to leave ’em. I don’t think I’m going back
next year, so… And that’s been something that I’ve been like wrestling with too. But I, honestly, I would rather volunteer my time over at South East Youth Association and not get paid than work for an organization that I have no passion for. I dread going into that job now. [07:28]

[Interruption]

P: [07:54] So now you work for City Funding…

G: Yeah.

P: So…I’ve gotta look at these questions. Have you had much contact with City Funding at all?

G: Honestly, I only know two women that work for City Funding. The grant writer has come in and talked to us, and I don’t know what this other woman does. All I know is like, I send out payroll and I send it to her. So that’s literally the only thing I know that she does, and Amy, the only thing I know that she does is she’s the grant writer. I don’t know what their job titles are. Like I don’t know what they do, I don’t know how many people are actually like involved with City Funding.? I don’t even know like who the chain of command is here.

P: Yeah.

G: So…It’s difficult. And I think like, I don’t think that they understand that City Funding is like seven of our staff at Lincoln right now have come from South East Youth Association. Like that’s, there’s two that have not. And that’s it.

P: So they’ve come straight through City Funding, the other two?

G: Yeah. Well one is actually a… I think she’s a teacher at Lincoln. And then the other one did come through City Funding. So that’s the only two of our staff, of our total staff that has come through….an organization that’s not the South East Youth Association. So I don’t think they understand like how much the South East Youth Association has actually given to this program.
P: [09:26] Do you think, so as this transition has happened has like, like the perception of the
parents and stuff and like the teachers has it been do you think most people see it as the City
Funding like pushing the South East Youth Association out, or like the South East Youth
Association pulling their resources out? [this whole section is muddy because of a blender in the
background]

G: See that I don’t really know, I know like the principal knows that City Funding kicked the
South East Youth Association out. But I don’t know like how the teachers feel about it, but I
know like all of the staff knows that, ya know, South East Youth Association got pushed out. I’m
just glad that like the kids don’t really know what’s going on right now. They’re just like, okay
well we got rid of science we got rid of art we’re getting rid of stuff, we don’t know why, but
they don’t understand that like that’s why. And it’s a struggle. Ya know because they always ask
like, when are we getting science back, like it’s the beginning of the year, like when are we
getting all our stuff back. And like our art now a days is like I go to the internet and I print off
pictures for them to color. That is what we call art. We don’t do science…We have a lot of kids,
it’s mostly fifth graders, third graders seem to be okay with it because they’re like, we get all this
free time to play, but fifth grade is like, I want to go home because I’m bored. I got my
homework done and I know we’re not gonna do anything for the rest of the day I wanna go
home. So….I think the fifth grade kind of understand that like something’s happening and they
don’t really know what, but they know that like things are changing and you would think that
with all this grant money that this woman has for us, that we would be able to provide for the
kids, that’s the whole point is to like have enrichment for the kids, get their homework done.
We’re supposed to be doing stuff for them to build them up and we have nothing.
P: Yeah, that stinks that that’s how that happens.
G: Nothing good has come out of this in my opinion. [11:23]

[Interruption]

P: [11:35] So the students like feel the effects but they don’t necessarily know why?
G: Yeah, I feel like it’s just the older students that kind of feel it. Which is why every day it seems like I have one or two fifth graders that are like, I want to go home I got my homework done that’s all I came here to do we’re not doing anything else so I want to go home. And I’m like well ya know if you don’t want to be here I can’t blame here, you can go home. Like I’m not gonna stop them from that. But like I said the third graders usually love because they’re like we have all this free time to do whatever we want because you know we don’t have science and we don’t have art and there’s nothing specific that we have to do so like we can run around in the gym all day and they love it, but…it’s difficult. Like I love the kids and I love going in there and seeing them every day, they make it worth it. But… City Funding makes it so boring [laugh] like there’s no other way to put it, it’s boring. Because we sit the kids on a computer all day, like they can play computer games or they can go in the gym and play with like a deflated basketball.

Those are their options and it’s awful. We have nothing for them. And I know over at the South East Youth Association, I’ve seen Lindsay posting pictures on the internet and stuff, and it looks phenomenal and I’m so excited for what they’re gonna do. And like, it breaks my heart to know that I’m not a part of that anymore. That like, the organization that I work for they’re like Christians on paper, like they write a grant like look at what we’re doing for these kids, we have this afterschool program and there’s all this money that’s going into it and, ya know. And on paper sure it looks really good, but like when you’re actually involved in it and in the middle of it and you can see that nothing good is coming out of this it’s like, you kind of wonder where all
that money is going. Because we have nothing, we have like, we don’t even have pencils you
know. It’s like all of our pencils have no erasers for the kids, like we have broken crayons [loud
noise on the TV, 13:40]

G: [13:53] So, I mean it’s just. I want to know what this grant writer is doing with all the money
that she supposedly. Has because she supposedly has like a hundred thousand dollars for all of
these programs and we’re not seeing any of it. And I know after the…did you hear about the
Washington program shutting down for like a week or two?
P: No.

G: No? Um. Their site coordinator quit. So their program shut down for like, I think it was like a
week and a half. And they hired…
P: This was December?

G: I think...yeah it was in December. And they hired a new site coordinator and she had to get
training before everything, ya know, before they restarted. But now it was like, their program got
shut down, South East Youth Association got kicked out, and now they’re trying to prove, see
we don’t need South East Youth Association we can have just you know as good of an
afterschool program as they did, and they get whatever they want. Anything that they want they
can have. But at Lincoln it’s like, it’s like pulling teeth trying to get something for these kids. So
I don’t really understand that.
P: Yeah.

G: So.
P: [15:08] Has City Funding like communicated at all like with the staff?

G: No.
P: None of the volunteers?
G: I mean I haven’t heard anything. And I feel like it’s really difficult to talk to Joanne about all of this stuff, because she’s really difficult to read sometimes. And I don’t know if it’s because she doesn’t want to show her emotions towards City Funding or towards South East Youth Association. And I know it’s difficult for her because whenever I bring up the South East Youth Association you can see the look on her face of how sad she is and like how it’s affected her.

And I don’t even know if she talks to them anymore. She’s not doing their summer camp anymore, but when I talked to Lindsay about it she was like, we didn’t know that Joanne wasn’t gonna do summer camp. Like they don’t communicate anymore. And that, that’s where it feels like a divorce, because it’s like I’ve known Joanne, Dan, and Lindsay like all together since I’ve been at the South East Youth Association and there such a good group of people when they work together, and to see Joanne to like break off of that…I mean it sucks, there’s no other way to put it. It sucks, and like I don’t know. I don’t know what to do because I feel like I’m being torn to pick a side like do I want to stay with Joanne and City Funding you know and like work with her, because she’s asked me to come back next year. Or do I want to like spend my time volunteering for an organization that like I’m really passionate about and I fully believe in? And it’s tough. I don’t know what to do. I’m trying to like decide which parent I want to live with, like that’s what it feels like. And I, I mean it’s tough. Cuz I’ve worked with Joanne more than I have Lindsay and Dan but I love the South East Youth Association so yeah. It’s difficult.

P: [17:06] I mean you’re even weighing a paid position with like just a volunteer spot with the South East Youth Association.

G: Mhm [affirmation].

P: Do you, do you see like the mission statement or like the mission of City Funding and the mission of South East Youth Association…
G: I don’t even know what City Funding’s mission statement is. I don’t know if they have a slogan, I should know that, but I mean I’m sure they do. I mean I’m sure they have one, but if they do I don’t know what it is. So… but like I know what South East Youth Association’s is and I know they live it out. Like they, like I said City Funding is like Christians on paper, and South East Youth Association is like Christians in action. Like you can actually see that they care about these kids. I mean they had that benefit dinner and they raised over three thousand dollars to go into this programming, and they had to raise that money because I mean grant writing is hard and I understand that, but the fact that they could raise that much money to put all into the program is amazing to me. Like we know where that money is going. But with City Funding it’s like we don’t know, I don’t know what their mission statement is, I mean… And if I did I don’t know if they were living it out or not. Like you would think with a name like City Funding like it would be a good organization. I mean it sounds good, but I don’t know. I’m not a fan of….them [laugh]

P: [18:42] Do you think there is a general perception from the community that like, City Funding is kind of like not a great place to be with?

G: I don’t know about the whole community, but I know that like among the staff at Lincoln at least. We’ll have little side conversations with… like anyone who’s been hired in through the South East Youth Association, we all talk about it sometimes we don’t know what’s going on, this sucks. Like todays gonna be terrible. Nobody wants to be there, you can feel the tension at work. Like nobody wants to be there. And we’re all counting down the minutes until its five thirty and we can go home, like, that’s all we’re there for now. That’s all I feel like I’m there for is I’m there until five thirty and I get to leave. When before like when the South East Youth Association was there it was like, I get to go and watch the kids do a science experiment today or I get to go and watch the kids learn how to build a business today, or watch them like make art
and not just color pictures that I printed off the internet. Like they’re actually making art and
learning stuff. But now it’s just like… okay I have to be here for three and a half hours so I might
as well find something to do. Like, you can feel that… there is one woman… and she is not my
favorite woman, so I’m just gonna leave her name out of it. She’s the woman who’s always just
so pumped to be there and she’s the one who got hired in through City Funding. She’s friends
with Amy, who’s the grant writer. So like, obviously she’s happy to be there. She’s the, literally
the only one who’s happy to be there every day. And everyone else is just like, I don’t want to be
there. I mean, me and at least two other girls that work there have talked about like quitting. I’ve
thought about it, but I don’t want to leave those kids. Like the though runs through my head at
least once a week. And that’s not how like you should feel towards your job. So it’s, it’s really
rough and I just keep thinking like, I only have to make it until April and it’ll be done. And
having that mentality makes it really difficult to go into work every day. Like I look forward to
the days when kids don’t have school. [laugh] Which is not good.

P: [20:56] But with the South East Youth Association you felt like drawn into…

G: Yeah! Like I was excited to go into work, I was excited for all the stuff that I knew that we
were gonna do. I mean, I don’t know why it happened. I don’t know if it’s just because the
woman who writes the grants wants her name on everything doesn’t want the South East Youth
Association to be like, well the South East Youth Association did this, and she’s like no I did it.
Like it’s my money I wrote the grant, me. [laugh] and that’s what I feel like she’s like ya know, I
wrote the grant for this I’m in charge of money, I’m in charge of what you guys get, so it’s all
about me. It’s not about the South East Youth Association, so…. I don’t really know like, why it
happened, but I’m happy for the South East Youth Association people and like I’ve told Lindsay
this before that the more kids that you take out of the Lincoln program, the better. Because I
know they’re gonna have a much better time at the South East Youth Association than they are at Lincoln. So.

P: [22:02] Has the South East Youth Association like pulled kids from Lincoln?

G: They’ve taken a couple because they called all of the kids that have been in the summer program and talked to the parents, and if the parents were like, yeah okay we’ll switch ’em over. But I think a lot of them are like, well we’ve already established friendships at Lincoln so we’re not gonna pull them out this year, but next year absolutely. So I think next year they’re gonna have a lot more students. They’ve taken at least five or six from Lincoln that I know of. And I mean it like I’m sad to see them go but I’m so happy that they’re gonna be at South East Youth Association like I’m torn.

P: That’s good. Has the South East Youth Association been like supportive for like the staff through the transition, like have they communicated well like reasons they had to pull out?

G: Mhm [affirm]. I mean I think so. I’ve talked to Dan a lot about it and ya know he’s explained like in depth everything that’s happening. Like his feelings about it and like Lindsay’s feelings and Joanne’s feelings and stuff and they’ve fully expressed that like there’s no hard feelings if you want to stay with City Funding absolutely none, like we understand you know, you need a paycheck go ahead and stay. But… [23:23]

[Interruption]

G: [24:07] I don’t remember what you were talking about. I’m sorry.

P: I had asked if you felt supported…

G: Right yeah, so like they’re fully supportive of the fact that we’ve stayed with City Funding, but they like Dan’s told us if you want to come over and volunteer for South East Youth Association you know, you are more than welcome. And I’ve told him like, if you ever need
someone to hire, I’m more than willing to work for you guys, but he’s told us he wants to hire people from the community who’ve like been involved with the South East Youth Association before and like know the community and know the kids and know what the community needs. Which I fully understand and I support that, I think that’s great that they’re hiring people in from the community, but yeah they’re very supportive. I feel like out of all of them I feel like Joanne is the least supportive, and I hate saying that, but it’s like anytime you bring up the South East Youth Association she just doesn’t know what to say and she just shuts off. And I know that she’s hurt from everything that’s happened and like we all are, but she doesn’t know how to express the way that she feels I think. She’s the only one I don’t feel like support from. Even though I’ve stayed with her [laugh].

P: I mean she’s been part of that team with the South East Youth Association for like…

G: Nine years or something.

P: Yeah, since the beginning of the partnership with the schools.

G: Yeah, which is why I think she is taking it so hard. But it’s difficult to like, be myself around her and like talk about it and all this stuff when I don’t know how to read her emotions toward it, like I feel like I can’t even bring it up around her, like anytime I bring up the South East Youth Association like I said, she just changes the subject or walks away from me or like. And I don’t know if she’s mad at me, I don’t know if she’s mad at Dan. I don’t know what I’m supposed to do here. I don’t know. That’s been probably one of the rougher things, because I just feel like I can’t talk to ya know, my supervisor.

P: [26:11] Yeah. Before did you feel like you could?

G: Mhm [affirm]. Yeah I wouldn’t ya know. South East Youth Association was part of City Funding like, Joanne was involved with all of that it was easy to talk to about it like what are we
doing today, do we need to get anything from the South East Youth Association, and it was
good. So I don’t know. I just feel like, I feel like without the South East Youth Association being
a part of the program, City Funding is not gonna last long for their afterschool program in
Lincoln.

P: [26:47] Do you know, does City Funding have an afterschool program at the school like
before the first round of the grant funding?

G: I have no idea, I know this is like their second five year grant. So they’ve go I think one more
year left in the grant but I don’t know if they did anything before the South East Youth
Association. I have no idea honestly. I’ve never been told that, so I don’t know. There’s not a lot
that I know about City Funding. Except they pay me [laugh]. That’s about it.

P: So were you hired like by the South East Youth Association but then employed by City
Funding is that how it worked?

G: Yeah, like I was supposed to go through an interview process my first year, but the people at
City Funding were like you know what, we trust who you pick you know your staff, you know
what you need. You guys go ahead and hire them so I got hired in by Dan and Lindsay because
they already knew me. And like I didn’t have to go through and interview process or anything.

But I get paid through City Funding. [27:57]

P: I think that’s mostly all the questions that I have…. [loud noises]

G: This was a really bad spot I’m sorry, I didn’t realize it would be this loud… [loud noises]

[Skip forward]

P: [28:30] Yeah, I guess the only other questions that I had is like is there anything you think that
I should like know as I like try and write this whole thing up?

G: I mean what exactly are you trying to…write up here? Ya know?
P: So I’m looking at how the South East Youth Association communicates their identity in kind
of like this time of, it’s kind of like they’re forced into this transition time, but it’s also like they
have kind of planned through it. So how have they communicated through actual
communication, but through things like their programs? So even things like, you said like their
mission statement [G: Mhm] Like that lines up with their actions
G: Oh it does.
P: So like that’s like a huge thing that I wanna look at because they have a very purposeful
mission statement, and core values and slogan and everything.
G: Oh yeah, and I mean, I don’t know if you’ve talked to Dan, you probably have, yeah. But I
mean you can just see that this is his dream this is what he’s wanted to do for a long time, be on
his own and run his own program and like being able to do everything that he fully believes in
without someone holding him back and he’s finally getting to do that, and I know that money is
kind of an issue right now which is understandable when you’re first starting out on your own
and you don’t have someone writing a grant for you, and you have to do it yourself. But you can
just see like how much happier he is being away from City Funding. I mean it was really tough at
first, but once he starts talking about it, and his mission statement and what he wants to do and
how he’s gonna implement all of his like values into his programming and like into the kids’
lives it’s so exciting to like see all that. And you can just see that like once South East Youth
Association broke away from City Funding that like everything that is South East Youth
Association they took it with him. And I know Mariah probably said this to you yesterday, but
it’s like they took the light away from the afterschool program. Like there’s nothing left there
that’s good. City Funding is terrible [laugh]. There’s no other way to put it, like I don’t know
what their purpose is except to like show the world that Amy has all this money that she’s
putting into the program ya know. That she’s like, I mean I would like to see the money being
put into the program, but like now I think her only thing is like, yeah we have an afterschool
program. So we’re, we’re good. We’re helping these kids out. But it’s been tough and I think
next year the South East Youth Association is gonna do really amazing things like, I know since
they’re just now starting out it might be a little rough but I think next year they’re gonna be so
much bigger and better than City Funding. So, I’m excited to see where they go.

P: Good, me too. So do you think, and I think this is my last question, is this transition and like
the South East Youth Association moving out of the schools is it, it’s really not like them
changing their path they’ve been going its more them, they’re continuing on and City Funding is
kind of like changing?

G: Yeah. I mean City Funding is the one that kicked them out. Dan didn’t want that at first and
City Funding wanted to get rid of everything South East Youth Association, we weren’t even
allowed to wear South East Youth Association ministries shirts to work. Because anything that
has the word South East Youth Association on it, we’re not allowed to have at Lincoln. Yeah.
Because like, one of the tutors wore, because Lindsay had a whole bunch of shirts made, one of
the tutors wore a South East Youth Association shirt one day for work and Joanne was like, hey
you can’t wear that. I thought she was joking, I can’t tell her personality. So another tutor wore it
like the next week and she was like, did you not hear me? You are not allowed to wear anything
that says South East Youth Association on it. Anything, like even if it’s just like a summer camp
shirt. Nothing. So she does not want South East Youth Association affiliated with City Funding
at all. So she’s the one who kicked us out and I think she’s gonna regret it honestly. Like I think
she’s gonna regret not having active Christian leadership in her afterschool program. Yep.
[laugh]
367  P: We’ll see how it all pans out.

368  G: It’ll be interesting [laugh] for sure. So….Anything else…? [33:11]
APPENDIX C. INFORMED CONSENT

Study Title: Case Study: Communicative Identity Construction at South East Youth Association

Principle Investigator: Peter Simionides, Graduate Student
Department of Media & Communication, Bowling Green State University

INTRODUCTION:

You are invited to participate in a research study. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Please read carefully the information provided below before agreeing to participate in this study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please contact Peter Simionides by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (330) 936-5534; E-mail: peters@bgsu.edu Any questions may also be asked of the graduate student’s advisor, Dr. Tom Mascaro by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (419) 372 0514; E-mail: mascarobgsu.edu

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the South East Youth Association reshapes its identity as an organization as it changes its programs and mission statement. This study seeks to benefit Southeast Midville by sharing community feedback with the South East Youth Association during this time of transition. Additionally it will further research on nonprofits in organizational communication.
PROCEDURE:
An interview of approximately half an hour in length will be conducted and transcribed for accuracy, primarily focusing on gaining deeper understanding of your experience with the South East Youth Association.

VOLUNTARY NATURE:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that you choose whether or not to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. Deciding to remove yourself from the study will in no way negatively affect you, or your relationship with the South East Youth Association or Bowling Green State University.

CONFIDENTIALITY PROTECTION:
The information you provide in this study is confidential. This means that the research records will include some information about you. This information will be protected by limiting access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location. Specifically, data collected will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and/or a password protected database, only accessible to the principal investigator and his faculty advisor. In the published report pseudonyms will be used for all cities, organizations, and individuals’ names. Therefore, any risk or possible discomfort to you due to participation in this study is expected to be minimal. However, if you have any concern about your participation in this study, please contact the principal investigator, Peter Simionides.
RISKS AND BENEFITS:

Participation in this study involves risks that are no greater than those encountered in normal daily life. The researchers will take every precaution to protect your confidentiality. Participation in this study may not benefit you directly but it will provide invaluable insight into the correlations between civic engagement and communication.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at Bowling Green State University at:

Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
Office of Research Compliance
309A University Hall
Bowling Green, OH 43403
Tel: 419-372-7716
Email: hrsb@bgsu.edu

Thank you for your time.

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this research study. You may request a copy of this form at any time.

Subject’s Name (printed) _________________________

Signature _____________________________ Date ______
I have been informed that this study involves the audio taping of my interview with the principal investigator. I have been informed that the tapes (digital recordings) will be transcribed. Transcripts of the interview may be reproduced in whole or in part for use in presentations or written products that result from this study.

Please check one of each pair of options:

**INTERVIEW**

A. ___ I consent to have my interview recorded.

   ___ I do **not** consent to have my interview recorded.

B. ___ I consent to the use of quotes from the written transcription of my interview in presentations and written products resulting from the study.

   ___ I do **not** consent to the use of quotes from the written transcription of my interview in presentations or written products resulting from the study.

______________________________ ________________
Participant's Signature       Date
APPENDIX D. LETTER TO PARENTS

Hello [Name],

This letter is in regards to the phone conversation you had with me (Peter Simionides), a graduate student from Bowling Green State University, about _________________. First, I wanted to thank you for taking the time to talk and answer the questions I had. Gaining parent feedback is really important to my overall project. This is important to the project because I am looking at how ________________ communicates who it is, through its different programs, especially the afterschool program. Knowing what parents value in the program is very helpful to both my project, and for ________________ as they hope to best meet the needs of the community.

On the following page are the notes that I took from our conversation, and I was hoping you could read through them and let me know if I accurately recorded what you had to say. If you approve of the notes, please sign on the indicated space at the bottom of the page. This page, along with the notes, can then be returned in the enclosed pre-stamped envelope.

All identifying information will be removed from the final published paper, so your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. In the written report your name will be changed so that any readers will be unable to identify your identity. This is done with the intention of protecting all parties involved in the process. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me. My contact information is on the following page.

Thank you for your help,

Peter Simionides

Bowling Green State University
Signing below indicates you agree to the following statements:

- I have agreed to participate in this voluntary research study.
- I consent to have the notes of my interview used in presentations and written products resulting from the study.
- You may request a copy of this form at any time.

Subject’s Name (printed) ________________________________

Signature ______________________________________ Date _________________

If you have any concern about the confidentiality, or the overall nature of this project please feel free to contact me. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study, please contact Peter Simionides by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (330) 936-5534; E-mail: peters@bgsu.edu Any questions may also be asked of my faculty advisor, Dr. Tom Mascaro by phone, or e-mail using the following contact information: Phone: (419) 372 0514; E-mail: mascaro@bgsu.edu
APPENDIX E. HSRB APPROVAL

DATE: April 6, 2016

TO: Peter Simionides
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board

PROJECT TITLE: [840002-3] Case Study: Communicative Identity Construction at South East Youth Association

SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: April 6, 2016

EXPIRATION DATE: December 17, 2016

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Amendment/Modification materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Modifications Approved:

Change the project title to: Case Study: Communicative Identity Construction at South East Youth Association.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on December 17, 2016. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
APPENDIX F. INTERVIEW REQUEST

Email to Dan Phillips

Hi Dan,

Wanted to email you regarding the conversations we have had concerning potential participants for further interviews. Thus far many of the interviews have come from personnel within the South East Community Association or those that have worked closely with you in the past. While there has been a variety of perspectives represented, there seems to still be unrepresented voices. Two perspectives that would still be really helpful to gaining a more in depth and comprehensive perspective on this transition, are those of parents and individuals from the nonprofit that wrote the grant for the after-school program. The perspectives of parents will ideally be gathered through the surveys that have been disseminated through the new South East Community Association after-school program, as well as potential follow up interviews. What remains is a discussion with either members of the grant-writing nonprofit's board or the director. However, much of the data I've gathered thus far has indirectly pointed at issues surrounding this organization, and because of this my desire is to proceed with caution. While I would request, for the integrity of this study, to speak with that nonprofit's director this study does not seek to harm, or bring damage to either you, your organization or any other parties involved or previously involved. Because of this I will leave the decision of whether or not to pursue this contact up to you and your board. While it would help the study, I desire to avoid any harm that it may cause. Thank you for your discretion and the time you have spared to participate in this project,
Peter Simionides

330 936 5534

Bowling Green State University

School of Media and Communication