



Caring Communities Records

Aka Walbridge Caring Communities

(S0731)

Collection Number: S0731

Collection Title: Caring Communities Records

Dates: 1989-2025

Creator: Caring Communities (Saint Louis, MO)

Abstract: The Caring Communities Records compiled by Veronica L. Banks from the work in Saint Louis contain bylaws, correspondence, meeting minutes, program booklets, state reports, VHS tapes, digital files, and photographs chronicling the organization's mission to provide comprehensive mental health and social services to African American children and families in underserved urban neighborhoods.

In 1989, four State of Missouri directors met with a key representative of the Danforth Foundation to discuss ideas about how school and community-based services could be designed to help students achieve higher levels of school success, while remaining safely in their homes and out of the juvenile justice system. Walbridge Elementary School, located in North St. Louis, was chosen as the pilot site. The concept was called the Walbridge Caring Communities Program (WCCP). Khatib A.F. Waheed was hired as the Executive Director, who along with the school's principal James Ewing, became the co-architects of the program involving a host of district and school staff, parents, neighborhood leaders, and other business, civic and labor leaders to establish what would eventually become a national model for providing family support and preservation services within a school-based neighborhood settings. Caring Communities was created in two locations in Missouri a urban pilot program in the city of St. Louis, Missouri and a rural pilot program in the northeast sector of Missouri in Knox-Schuyler county; both created in 1989.

A preliminary evaluation of the work at Walbridge led to an expansion in the number of sites from one in 1989 to twenty by 1994. By 1997, after the Caring Communities concept had become a state-wide phenomenon, State and civic leaders decided to move away from the original direct service delivery model developed at Walbridge Elementary, to take on a more traditional role of funding, fiscal oversight, and data monitoring. All the sites became known as Caring Community Partnerships under the auspices of the newly created Family and Community Trust. In St. Louis, the Community Partnership was named the Area Resources for Community and Human Resources (ARCHS). Khatib A.F. Waheed was hired as its founding Executive Director.

Collection Size: 1.4 feet
(23 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Caring Communities Records* (S0731); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Veronica L. Banks on April 17, 2025 (Accession No. SA4747).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Caring Communities Records (S0731) can be found in the following collections:

[Citizens for Missouri's Children Records](#), (S0861)

Processed by: Processed by Zack Palitzsch, May 2025

Historical Note:

The Walbridge Caring Communities Program (WCCP) began on May 15, 1989, at Walbridge Elementary School in the north St. Louis neighborhood of Walnut Park. The WCCP was an innovative pilot program in systems reform supported by a public-private partnership that provided funding, resources, and interagency support. The principal partners were the Danforth Foundation and the Missouri Departments of Mental Health, Elementary & Secondary Education and Social Services. Khatib A.F. Waheed was the Executive Director, who along with the school's principal James Ewing, worked closely with the public-private partners, school site administrators, staff, community residents, parents, and youths to design and implement the WCCP model. The initial success of the work at Walbridge, generated so much interest and support that Caring Communities was expanded to twenty school-based program sites between 1989 -1994.

The WCCP model demonstrated how a comprehensive service delivery system comprised of family support and preservation services and programs developed with strong resident support could be effectively provided in school and community-based settings where the children and students lived. The menu of services included the following: after-school tutoring; before and after school latchkey programs for working parents; job readiness and placement services; anti-drug trafficking activities and demonstrations; home-based case management services; school-based child centered-behavioral health day treatment services; drug and alcohol counseling and support groups; health education and health fairs and an intensive home-based family intervention model to support families whose children were at risk of placement in foster care or juvenile detention called Families First.

The six initial program sites were established in overwhelmingly African American populated neighborhoods and communities. It made sense to the parents, teachers, students, and program staff to use an African and African American centered, values-based framework to help reinforce positive self-esteem, important concepts about strengthening families and an increasing sense of individual and community responsibility, accountability, and pride. WCCP was inspired by the African Proverb, “It takes a village to rear a child” in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s. The proverb became further popularized in the title of a book published in 1996 by then first Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton entitled, “It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us.” Across the state of Missouri, with strong legislative support, and administered under the auspices of the Family and Community Trust (FACT), Caring Communities partnerships were established in one hundred sites. In 1997, the Caring Communities in St. Louis was restructured and renamed the Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS). Waheed was hired as its founding Executive Director.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into twenty-three folders based on the original arrangement provided by Veronica L. Banks, former Operations Manager of Caring Communities.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection contains bylaws, correspondence, meeting minutes, videos, program booklets, digital records, reports, and photographs chronicling the Caring Communities’ mission to provide comprehensive health and social services to children and families in St. Louis City. Of note are histories of Walbridge Caring Communities, St. Louis Caring Communities, St. Louis Community Partnership, ARCHS, Khatib A.F. Waheed as well as reports on related organizations’ efforts in providing services to underprivileged communities, such as Missouri Family and Community Trust, Area Resources for Community and Human Services (ARCHS), and the Sustainable Neighborhood Initiative. The materials in this collection date from 1989 to 2025.

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