



Nurturing the One, Supporting the Many: The Center for Family Life in Sunset Park, Brooklyn

Peg McCartt Hess, Brenda G. McGowan, Michael Botsko

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Since its establishment in 1978 the Center for Family Life has been an integral source of assistance to immigrant families in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, a community struggling with poverty, unemployment, health issues, drug-related problems, youth gang activity, a housing shortage, and oversubscribed schools. This book is a narrative of the development of the Center and its relations with the surrounding community.

With its unique combination of community-rootedness and clinical sophistication, the Center serves as a programmatic model for other family service contexts. Underlying the Center's programs and the staff's interactions with families is a philosophy and theoretical orientation that embraces clients in a shared sense of responsibility for change, focuses on all family members and on families as systems, and emphasizes the developmental and the expressive.

Almost 30% of the community's children and youth are participating in one or more Center services over the course of a year. Such services include after-school childcare, summer camp, creative and performing arts programs, recreation, youth development and parent education, employment programs for adults and youth, comprehensive emergency services to meet family needs for food, clothing, and financial assistance; individual, family, and group counseling; and neighborhood foster care. The authors supply case studies and supporting theoretical material, and discuss the implications for professional practice, education, research, and policy that can be derived from studying the Center's experience.



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