



## Partners for Impact, LLC

Beth Bordeaux, MSW  
Co-Owner/Senior Advisor

Stan Holt, PhD  
Co-Owner/Senior Advisor

Charlene Reiss, PhD  
Consultant

# The Community Facilitator Pilot Project at the North Street Neighborhood

Final Report for HOPE NC  
January 31, 2025

## INTRODUCTION

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In September 2023, [HOPE NC](#) contracted Partners for Impact to provide a developmental evaluation of the pilot Community Facilitator program in the [North Street Neighborhood](#). In a developmental evaluation, the evaluator works with staff to continuously collect, consider, and use information to shape and improve a project as it unfolds, rather than waiting until its completion to measure its success and make changes.<sup>1</sup> HOPE NC hired Collin Flake as the Community Facilitator at North Street Neighborhood in December 2023.

Background information on HOPE NC and the North Street Neighborhood are provided in a baseline evaluation report completed in March 2024. A mid-year report completed in September 2024 largely focuses on the Community Facilitator's role in supporting an inclusive community for neighborhood residents without disabilities or children with disabilities. This year-end evaluation report is intended to summarize the impact of the Community Facilitator's work in the North Street Neighborhood from January 2024 to January 2025, identify lessons learned, and provide recommendations as the work of community facilitation moves forward at North Street and in other HOPE NC communities.

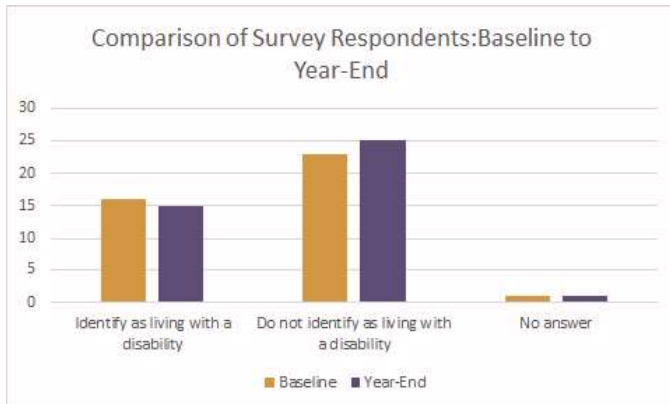
## EVALUATING THE COMMUNITY FACILITATOR PILOT PROGRAM

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This final stage of the evaluation utilizes data from an anonymous survey designed as a follow-up to the baseline survey deployed one year ago. This electronic survey, also provided to residents on paper, was available from December 10, 2024 through January 22, 2025 and completed by 41 individuals. This is comparable to the 40 responses for the baseline survey, but

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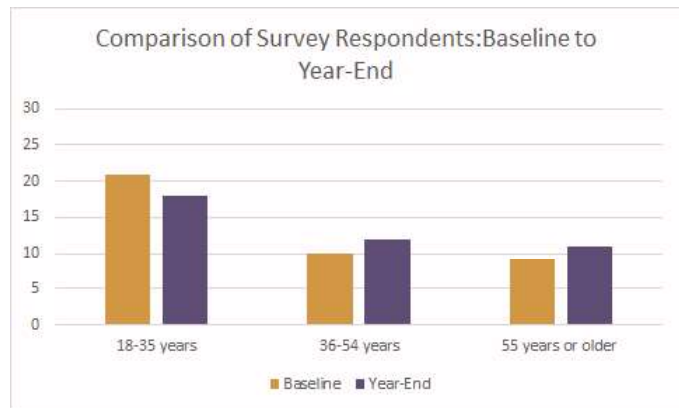
<sup>1</sup>FSG: [The Case for Developmental Evaluation](#)



as an anonymous instrument, the extent of overlap between the two respondent groups is unknown. The distribution across disability status and age groups is similar but not exact between the two surveys. Of the 41 respondents to the year-end survey, 15 identify as living with a disability, 25 do not, and 1 chose not to answer. By age, 18 or 44% of year-end respondents are 18-35 years old, 12 or 29% are 36-54, and 11 or 27% are 55 or older. Because of the small sample size,

particularly of those identifying as having a disability, a breakdown by both age and ability will not be shared here.

This report also includes qualitative data gathered in additional interviews with North Street residents, volunteers active in the neighborhood, the Resident Support Network, and the Residents Council. In meetings with individuals, pairs, and groups, 23 individuals answered questions about their experiences with the Community Facilitator, the impact on their participation and feelings of connectedness, and assistance that they and their loved ones received during the year. Sense-making meetings with the Community Facilitator have contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the data.



The theory of change and subsequent job description associated with the Community Facilitator position has three focus areas: building community and fostering inclusion; connecting with the surrounding community; and providing support. This framework has guided the evaluation, data collection, and reporting on progress toward the short-, medium-, and long-term goals of the project.

Overall, the response to the Community Facilitator program is extremely positive. More than one person interviewed shared that the results have exceeded expectations. The Community Facilitator has also received overwhelmingly positive feedback. He noted that new residents have expressed that the program has made them feel more comfortable and welcome in the neighborhood. The longer-term residents have also seen the positive benefits and hope to have the Community Facilitator program continue.

## SUPPORTING ADULTS

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A primary component of the Community Facilitator's work has been to assist residents of North Street in receiving adequate support for their daily and long-term needs. The Community Facilitator's support has largely been focused on - but not limited to - individuals with disabilities, particularly those who do not have family or caregivers living in the immediate area. In the survey, 8 of the 15 respondents who identify as living with a disability and 8 of the 25 respondents who do not identify as living with a disability indicated that they had received assistance of some kind from the Community Facilitator in the past year. This included support in completing forms, troubleshooting technology and communication issues, requesting help with transportation from neighbors, and getting to activities. Assistance ranged from larger undertakings, e.g. organizing the holiday Makers' Market, to small but important acts such as fixing a troublesome smoke detector and moving furniture to improve a small living space. Besides providing support, the Community Facilitator has also provided an extra level of information-gathering and dissemination of requests and questions within the neighborhood to create more connections and opportunities for neighbors to help each other.

The data from January 2024 includes comments from multiple people about hosting parties in their homes this year. The Community Facilitator assisted several individuals with disabilities to translate their hopes into real events. For some, this support included sending out invitations, acquiring supplies, and setting up the space. For others, the Community Facilitator helped the whole family think through what was needed to make a gathering happen. These events were mentioned multiple times in interviews as examples of how direct assistance from the Community Facilitator increased the sense of belonging and community.

Beginning in March 2024, the Community Facilitator organized a series of Community Education sessions for members of the North Street Neighborhood and their families and caregivers. Several of these sessions aligned with the goals of the Community Facilitator program by focusing on safety and emergency planning, circles of support, and improving healthy practices. Topics ranged from aging in place and Innovation Waivers to budgeting and meal preparation. When possible, residents of North Street were presenters or leaders at the sessions. Attendance at events varied but feedback to the Community Facilitator, from interviewees, and in the survey was positive. Multiple people expressed appreciation that the Community Facilitator was organizing these education events even though they themselves were unable to attend all of them. Other respondents discussed their importance to the community and wished that attendance were higher.

In addition to the direct support to people with disabilities at North Street, the Community Facilitator's presence and assistance has provided unexpected benefits to families and caregivers. Some caregivers shared that the additional activities with the Community Facilitator have served almost as respite care during the day. Other neighbors interviewed said that the new activities and increased relationships are easing the load of people who have historically provided a lot of support to neighbors with disabilities.

When the Community Facilitator began working in the North Street Neighborhood, priorities included a significant focus on transportation and easing barriers to travel. The Community Facilitator has found that this was both less of a need and also more difficult to organize than expected. Many North Street residents are able to navigate by public transportation, by foot, or have their own vehicles. In the year-end survey, 8 of the 15 respondents with disabilities indicated that they were able to travel more easily as a result of assistance from the Community Facilitator. Success in this area primarily involved connecting individuals for occasional rides, and was more difficult when looking for longer-term transportation commitments from neighbors.

While the Community Facilitator has had a positive impact in helping many individuals at North Street, the role cannot - and was not designed to - replace services and some other pieces that residents need to live independently and participate fully in community. This pilot year has given residents a better idea of who does well in the North Street Neighborhood, and who still needs more and/or different types of support. The Community Facilitator spoke of discerning where the lines between the Community Facilitator role and other supports are drawn. For example, an individual's case manager has responsibility for handling many issues associated with navigating systems and obtaining services. The Community Facilitator can not replace a case manager but can help 'grease the wheels' for their work by providing information and filling some gaps in support. The Community Facilitator can also focus on building relationships and has flexibility to address the social-emotional needs of the entire community.

## CONNECTING WITH THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

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According to the Community Facilitator's records, he has contacted 36 businesses and organizations in the community in the past year for resources and partnership opportunities. The Community Facilitator has coordinated visits with North Street residents to places such as the Durham Center for Senior Life, the Durham County Library, and Zumba classes at ReCity. Visits to coffee shops and restaurants are also often on the schedule. Weekly walks on Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons have been well received by residents, with attendance varying from 3 - 11 participants in somewhat seasonal patterns. Those interviewed who participate regularly in the walks enjoy visiting local businesses, parks, and resources. They enjoy being with other people and having a reason to be more social during the day.

The Community Facilitator has connected North Street with the surrounding community not only by taking residents out of the neighborhood to a variety of locations but also by bringing individuals into the neighborhood to join activities. In 2024, several retired and semi-retired residents from a nearby apartment community have been regular participants in the afternoon walks. One participant described the time as, "an opportunity to get to know people who are younger, differently-abled, and have had different life experiences." She enjoyed the inclusive nature of the gatherings and the chance to build relationships with people who live in her area.

She has also attended other events at North Street with her spouse, sharing that she appreciated being welcomed and known by the residents. At the same time, her presence and that of other individuals from beyond the neighborhood helps connect residents of North Street to the broader community. The Community Facilitator noted that both the community partners and the North Street residents have felt the benefits of these new friendships, leading them to show up consistently and deepen their relationships. Another resident described this connection as “opening up the world of North Street Neighborhood to more neighbors in the community” and said, “North Street is an island that needs to be part of the whole big ocean.”

One parent felt that more presence and visibility of people with disabilities has had a positive impact on the surrounding neighborhood. The parent has noticed more local businesses indicating that their facilities are fully accessible, which seems to be a change from past years. Staff at local coffee shops and businesses recognize and welcome their regular customers from North Street, further connecting residents to the surrounding community.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY AND FOSTERING INCLUSION

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From his work with people with disabilities, researcher Erik W. Carter, PhD has created resources to foster belonging in communities. His recommendations are organized around ten dimensions: present, invited, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, heard, befriended, needed, and loved.<sup>2</sup> In analyzing the data from interviews and surveys of North Street residents, the common themes that emerge can be mapped to this wheel of belonging. Connection to some dimensions is clearer than others but most appear throughout the interviews and survey answers.



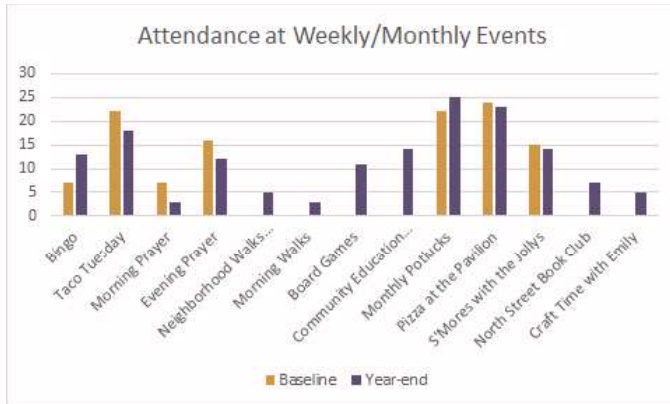
### *To Belong Is to Be Present*

To increase the sense of belonging in the North Street Neighborhood, residents need opportunities to meet and get to know each other with minimal barriers. To that end, the Community Facilitator has introduced a variety of additional activities to the North Street Neighborhood schedule over the course of the year. In addition to the weekly walks and Community Education sessions, the Community Facilitator has implemented regular gatherings to play board games, a craft time, and a book club. The list of additional events include birthday parties, welcome and farewell get-togethers for neighbors, and outings to movies and trivia nights. The Community Facilitator has also created more informal spaces such as inviting residents to hang out at lunchtime in the neighborhood pavilion several days each week.

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<sup>2</sup> Belonging: A Community Conversation on Disability and the Church; downloaded from <https://bcdd.soe.baylor.edu/faith/resources>

Comparing the baseline survey with the year-end results, respondents indicating they have attended individual weekly and annual events has increased in some areas and decreased in others from early to late 2024. For example, 13 people said they attend weekly Bingo in the year-end survey compared to 7 at baseline; and the response for monthly potlucks increased from 22 to 25. In contrast, numbers for Morning and Evening Prayer have decreased, largely due to a change in scheduling. Given the number of additional activities and events added during the year, a decrease in attendance at some individual events is to be expected.



The number of people responding that there are activities they would like to attend but cannot increased from 16 to 20 from baseline to year-end. In the year-end survey, the primary reasons listed for not being able to participate were time and scheduling conflicts. Multiple survey responses mentioned that daytime activities conflicted with their work schedules.

Interviewees and survey respondents are concerned that they are not seeing people without disabilities participating at a higher rate than before the Community Facilitator program. While individuals understand that people working full-time are unable to participate in events during daytime hours, they still expressed some disappointment with turn-out and how few neighbors step up to help plan some of the bigger annual events. The Community Facilitator has received this feedback and has been trying to address it within the limitations of his part-time position. Making more connections with retired community members outside of North Street would help ease some of the concerns about attendance at activities by neighborhood residents who are working full-time and/or have caregiving responsibilities within their own families.

### To Belong Is to Be Invited

Consistent communication about events and activities was mentioned repeatedly as a major improvement since the Community Facilitator started working. Having information in advance helps residents plan ahead to participate while clear descriptions of what will be happening can reduce anxiety about attending. The Community Facilitator uses multiple modes of communication to ensure that all neighbors know they are invited. This includes email, a notice board at the center of the neighborhood, and a WhatsApp group chat. If requested, the Community Facilitator also follows up with calls or texts to individuals as needed. One survey respondent described what makes them feel welcome as, “receiving the invitation/knowing they are happening and all are welcome,” and another said, “kind people, events with clear descriptions of what we're doing, excitement around them from neighbors.”

### *To Belong Is to Be Welcomed*

In both surveys, a large percentage of respondents indicated that they feel welcome at events in the neighborhood. The number increased from 92.5% to 95.1% from baseline to year-end with the number of people with disabilities indicating they do not feel welcome decreasing from 2 to 1 across surveys. Reasons shared for feeling welcome include: “being surrounded by friends,” “people want to know your name, and then remember it next time they see you,” and “people say welcome and hi to me.” In interviews, individuals expressed deep appreciation for the Community Facilitator’s efforts to make everyone feel welcome and included in activities.

Eight respondents to the year-end survey moved into the North Street Neighborhood in 2024. All of these new residents indicated they were aware of the intentional community before they moved in. Creating a welcome packet for new residents had been on the North Street community’s list of things to do but until the Community Facilitator started, no one had had enough time to assemble one. Seven of the new residents said the welcome packets they received from the Community Facilitator when they moved in were very helpful and one person found it moderately helpful. New residents interviewed also said that the Community Facilitator checked in on them, showed them around the neighborhood, and helped them get set up to receive regular invitations and communication, making them feel welcome and part of the community.

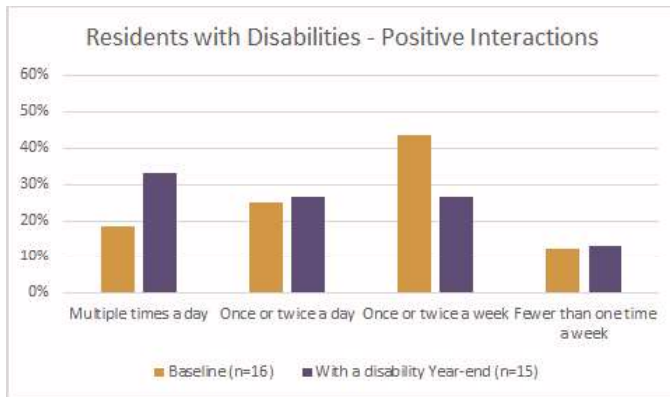
### *To Belong Is to Be Known*

The Community Facilitator has been very intentional about adding new activities based on the interests of the North Street residents. Multiple interviewees expressed appreciation for the Community Facilitator’s ability to create opportunities that match the interests of neighborhood residents, either with single events or ongoing activities. One person described the Community Facilitator as, “really good at figuring out individual interests. Once he knows about it, he figures out how to develop activities around it and embraces the interests of others.” Another parent remarked, “It’s clear that the Community Facilitator has thought about [my son’s specific interest] and what would work best for him and his needs. He helped us think through and process to be able to host a gathering for our son.” The Community Facilitator has also reminded participants that when activities are no longer fun or interesting, they can be changed or ended. With a focus on those living with disabilities, the Community Facilitator has followed the lead of residents to identify new activities rather than imposing programming on them. The new schedule aligns with residents’ interests and fills some gaps in the life of the community.

### *To Belong Is to Be Accepted*

The voluntary nature of the events in North Street Neighborhood sets it apart from experiences that some of the residents have had in other settings. Several interviewees said they appreciated that activities were available when they wanted to attend and, as importantly, that they had the freedom to *not* attend. One resident said, “I feel no pressure to participate when things are too people-y.” Making their own choices about how they spend their time is very important to their life in the neighborhood. Recognizing this, the Community Facilitator reiterates frequently that participation is always voluntary and applies no pressure to residents.

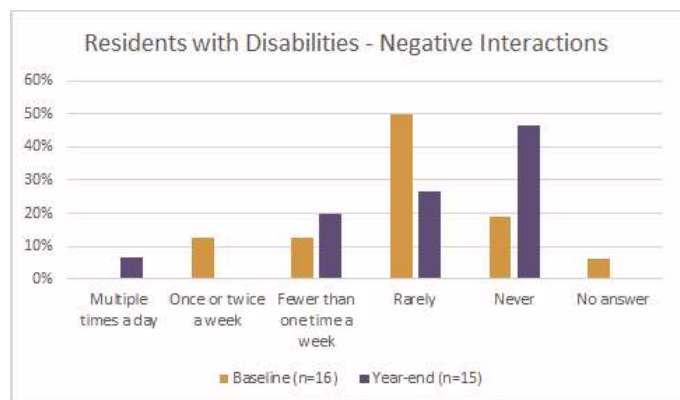
Positive interactions with neighbors can also contribute to feelings of acceptance and belonging. From the beginning to the end of 2024, the number of people indicating that they experienced positive interactions within the community multiple times a day increased from 25.0% to 29.27%, and once or twice a day from 37.5% to 46.3%. Respondents with disabilities with multiple positive interactions per day increased from 18.8% to 33.3%, while once or twice a day increased from 25.0% to 26.7%. Of all respondents, the number of people who said they never experienced negative interactions increased from 15.0% to 36.59% from baseline to year-end. Among people with disabilities, those numbers increased from 18.8% to 46.7% between surveys.



The Community Facilitator also understands that not all residents of North

Street are extroverts or comfortable in social settings. Some do not have a lot of interest in participating in group activities. Balancing individual desires for solitude with the risks of isolation, the Community Facilitator regularly reaches out to more introverted neighbors with disabilities who do not participate regularly in neighborhood events. Even if they choose not to connect, the communication reflects that they belong in the community.

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*To Belong Is to Be Involved*

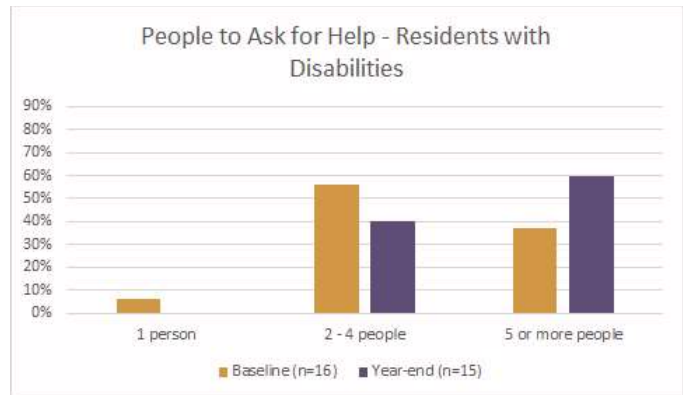
By offering activities nearly every day, more residents of North Street have chances to become actively engaged in the community. In addition, the Community Facilitator is also encouraging residents to plan formal or informal gatherings on their own. By encouraging people to invite others outside of their usual social circles, the Community Facilitator is getting more residents involved in building the community and fostering a sense of inclusion. Widening the invitations gives individuals with fewer connections more opportunities to socialize and broaden their own circles. According to the Community Facilitator, “connection begets more connection; isolation begets isolation. Extending invitations creates an atmosphere where people feel more comfortable extending invitations of their own.”

In interviews, several parents noted the increased involvement of their children who had not regularly participated in neighborhood activities before the Community Facilitator started. They

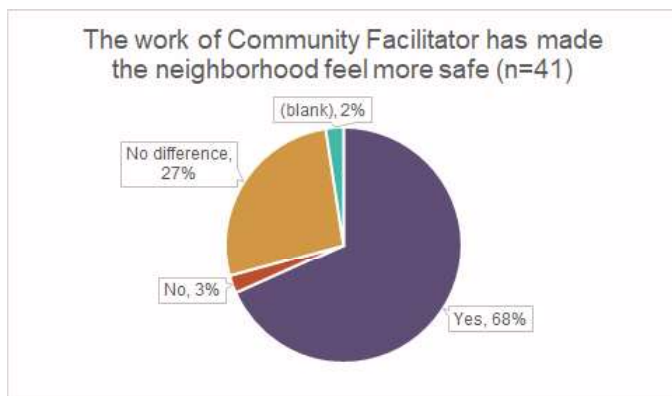
see that their children are happier about being part of North Street Neighborhood but also not limited or contained by it. They have agency and choice and opportunity within the neighborhood. One interviewee commented that in years past, residents would speak only of Reality Ministries events; now she is hearing people talk excitedly about what is happening at North Street. “It’s a center of gravity shift.”

To Belong Is to Be Supported

One of the components of the Community Facilitator’s job description is to provide support to individuals so they can more fully participate in the community as they wish. The North Street neighborhood was built on the concept of mutual support among neighbors and that remains an important component of its culture. In the baseline survey, most respondents with disabilities (56.3%) indicated that they had 2-4 people in the neighborhood who they could ask for help, while 37.5% said they had 5 or more people. One respondent said they had only one person they felt comfortable asking for help. In the year-end survey, no one with a disability said they had only one person, 40.0% had 2-4, and the number having 5 or more people to ask for help increased to 60.0% of respondents.



Among respondents without disabilities, more people (82.6%) indicated they had 5 or more people to ask for help in the baseline survey than at year-end (56.0%); the number saying they had 2-4 rose from 17.4% to 36.0%. The individuals who did not share their disability status indicated they had 2-4 people to ask for help in both surveys.



Another component of support involves safety. A goal of the Community Facilitator program is to help members of the community and their families trust that North Street is a safe place to live and that neighbors are watching out for each other. In the year-end survey, 68.3% of the respondents agreed that the work of the Community Facilitator made the neighborhood feel more safe. Among people living with a disability, 80.0% of

respondents said the neighborhood feels more safe while 20.0% indicated they saw no difference. One interviewee remarked, “The Community Facilitator provides a sense of safety and cohesion without controlling everything; there’s no pressure to participate in activities but

the Community Facilitator is always responsible and inclusive.” Others mentioned that they are more at peace knowing that the Community Facilitator is looking out for their child and is available to help when needed. More residents walking with someone instead of alone after dark was also mentioned as an indicator of increased safety. The Community Facilitator expressed that although not a lot of specific activities have been focused on safety, many people seem to feel that neighbors have more of an eye out for each other now, increasing the overall sense of safety in the community.

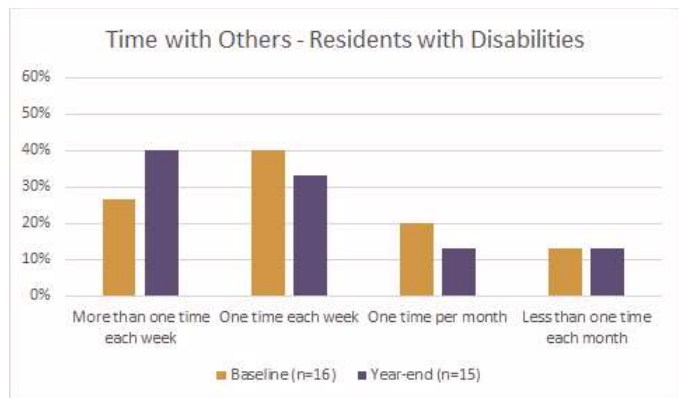
To Belong Is to Be Heard

A repeated observation in the year-end interviews is about the Community Facilitator as a very good listener. One resident described the Community Facilitator as really wanting to hear what people say, inviting input and incorporating feedback to improve his offerings. Others remarked that the Community Facilitator is able to interpret what people need but may not be able to articulate. Additional comments were shared about the Community Facilitator’s willingness to listen to each person’s story, which has helped with some conflict resolution among residents.

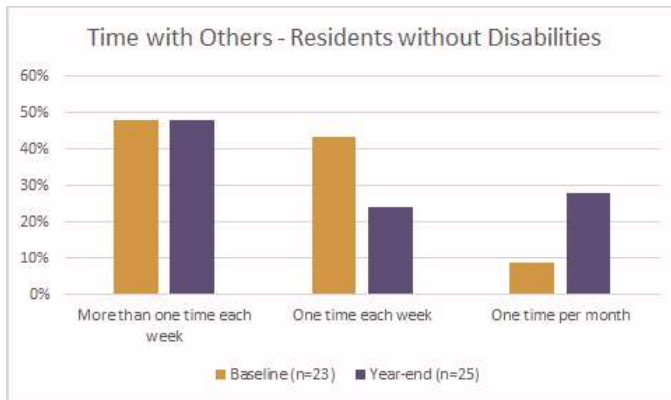
In discussing the evaluation findings, the Community Facilitator has felt that the component of listening and making sure people feel heard is critical to the role. Many residents in the North Street Neighborhood have previous experience living in institutions or with families, sometimes in settings where they are required to adhere to the house schedule and participate in activities. The Community Facilitator emphasizes the importance of hearing people, respecting their choices, and not making decisions for them. Talking to a new resident with recent experience in a group home, the Community Facilitator asked what they would want to do if they could do anything. With the answers, the Community Facilitator is now trying to make those things happen. The Community Facilitator considers the position to be not only about offering programs. It is about really hearing what people want to do and then making space for them to do that.

To Belong Is to Be Befriended

In addition to activities and events, multiple interviewees remarked on the increase in new friendships in the past year. One resident has noticed people taking walks together who had not often socialized with each other in years past. Several people said they were seeing more interaction across long-standing social groups, with one remarking that, “The Community Facilitator has been a good bridge among the little social pockets” in the neighborhood.



Survey responses show that the time people spend with others in the neighborhood may have increased from the beginning to the end of the year. Among people with a disability, 40.0% of

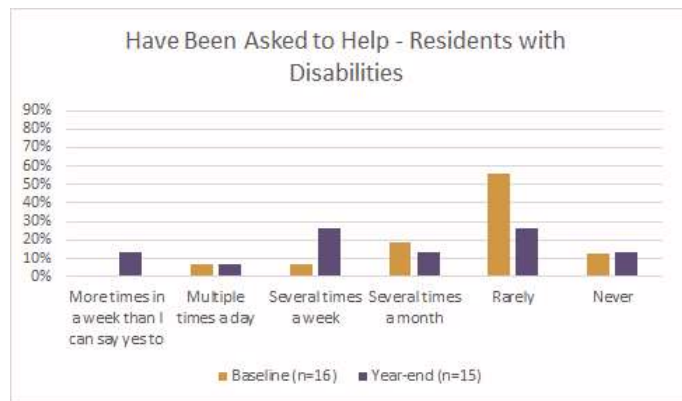


respondents said they spend time with others outside of planned events more than once a week, up from 26.7% in the baseline survey. For those without a disability, those spending time with others once per month rose from 8.7% to 28% while those answering “more than one time each week” remained nearly the same. The individuals who did not share their disability status indicated they have interactions with others once per week in

both the baseline and year-end surveys.

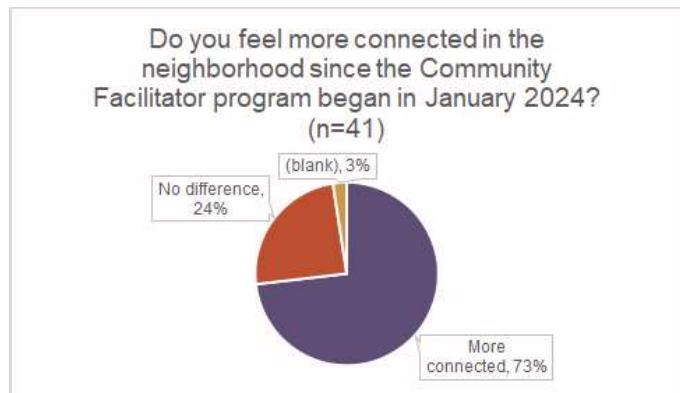
*To Belong Is to Be Needed*

Within a community based on mutual support, a sense of belonging comes not just from being able to ask for help but by also being asked. Individuals feel valued when they can contribute and feel needed. In the year-end survey, responses show that people with disabilities are getting more requests to help than they were at the beginning of the year. The number of individuals with disabilities responding that they are asked for help several times a week rose from 6.3% to 26.7% and those answering rarely dropped from 56.3% to 26.7% from the first to the second survey. In interviews, residents spoke of assisting by walking their neighbors’ dogs, helping people move, and pushing friends who use wheelchairs to events.



*To Belong Is to Be Loved*

While the surveys and interviews did not include “love” in a question, the concepts of care and connection as components of love run through all conversations with and about North Street residents. Many have said that the people are what makes North Street a special place to live and that they value the opportunity to live among so many friends. The Community Facilitator has helped nurture existing connections and build a wider net of relationships by making it easier for people to gather together regularly. In the year-end survey, 73% of respondents said that they feel more connected in the



neighborhood since the Community Facilitator program began. Among respondents with disabilities, 80% feel more connected. A smaller percentage (68.0%) of people without disabilities feel more connected, a finding in line with their limited availability to participate in events and activities. Within the neighborhood, in both planned activities and unstructured social time, the Community Facilitator has created opportunities for individuals to share space, become more comfortable with each other, open their social circles, love and be loved, and find new ways to belong to the community.

## LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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As one interviewee said, “This was a relationship-building year, which is an important place to start.” The more tangible support and assistance with specific tasks have improved daily life and eased barriers to participating in the community for some of the residents. In interviews and surveys, however, people felt and expressed the importance of the relational work over the transactional. With additional activities and better communication providing more structure, the community has made progress toward the goal of an increased sense of belonging and improved well-being.

Lessons emerging from this finding include:

- 1) A paid position has made it possible for the North Street Neighborhood to address needs that residents have identified for many years. This includes having additional regularly-scheduled activities during the day; improved communication, including the Welcome Packet for new neighbors; and intentional outreach to neighbors who do not have family or caregivers in the immediate area. Relying on volunteers with other responsibilities has not provided the consistent attention to all residents that the neighborhood wants and needs.
- 2) While people appreciate that activities are happening, the activity itself has emerged as less important than the space and opportunities for people to connect and spend time together. Many residents with disabilities have shared a desire for more unstructured time with others and a place to just hang out. An ideal space would be accessible to all, comfortable year-round, not need advance scheduling, and not require purchasing food or beverages. This is challenging to find within blocks of North Street Neighborhood but the Community Facilitator continues to explore different options.
- 3) Communication is key. People want to know what is happening in the neighborhood so they can plan ahead to participate. Even if people cannot attend, receiving the information lets them know they are invited and welcome. This helps to create cohesion and increase the sense of community.
- 4) After a year of the Community Facilitator program, residents feel more connected to the neighborhood and their neighbors. The Community Facilitator commented that this is more true of the residents with disabilities, and most true in the group of people with disabilities who are more outgoing, do not have barriers to participation, and who want to connect with their neighbors. Residents without disabilities and people who do not

participate because of barriers have experienced less impact from the program. Primary barriers to benefiting from the Community Facilitator program include communication challenges with some individuals, despite trying different ways to connect; communication with individuals who do not have a clear desire to connect; and basic social skills, anxiety, and some emotional baggage with existing relationships in this long-standing community. The Community Facilitator also noted that, “As people interact more, they have more opportunities to get annoyed with each other. A side effect of more interaction is more conflict needing to be managed.”

While fostering inclusion through relationship-building has been a primary outcome in this first year, the need to support some residents in their daily lives continues. The discernment of the role of the Community Facilitator to meet these needs is ongoing. From the interviews, surveys, and conversations with the Community Facilitator, additional lessons and recommendations have emerged.

- 1) The initial job description for the Community Facilitator included assisting with starting new circles of support for community members. It quickly became evident that this was beyond the scope of a part-time position with other responsibilities. While building new circles presents challenges, the Community Facilitator should know residents’ existing natural and formal connections. This information can help the Community Facilitator when encouraging residents to reach out to their network when they need assistance or support.
- 2) While the Community Facilitator can help connect residents to resources, it can be difficult for one person to keep up with the constantly changing landscape of services and providers. The Community Facilitator can help residents by having knowledge of agencies in the area that help with securing resources and connecting them as needs emerge.
- 3) The role of the Community Facilitator is not just providing a service. The Community Facilitator noted that, “if people feel like the program is just one more service, they will engage less.” It is relationship-forward with healthy boundaries, filling a gap that services do not address without treating residents as clients with only needs to be met.
- 4) Having an understanding of the community has helped the Community Facilitator better navigate the dynamics and responsibilities of the role. Connections with people who have history and context have also helped address challenges, answer questions, and provide opportunities to verify intuitions when working around and within neighborhood relationships.
- 5) As a Community Facilitator, it can be challenging to navigate what parents see as best for their children while respecting the child’s personal choices. The risks of isolation and unhealthy choices are real concerns for loved ones. The Community Facilitator can be one more person providing information, nudging individuals toward better choices without being paternalistic. The role can be strengthened by encouraging streamlined communication with family members on issues such as benefits received or to be

applied for and pressing health concerns. This additional information would save time and help the Community Facilitator provide more relevant and appropriate support.

- 6) For the Community Facilitator to support residents with disabilities, understanding the systems that people are navigating is important, but the power to overcome the barriers created by the system is limited. The Community Facilitator can help illuminate the systemic challenges for others who want to advocate for their neighbors and work for systemic change.

## CONCLUSION

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One year into the Community Facilitator program, the quantitative and qualitative data point to many successes and accomplishments. While not all goals identified in the early stages have been met, much has been learned about what such a position can and cannot provide for the community. The feelings of inclusion and connection have increased, particularly among the residents with disabilities living in the North Street Neighborhood. People appreciate that more opportunities to interact are available, even when they are not able or interested in participating in everything. Residents feel that they are being heard by the Community Facilitator and their input is valued. And a focus on building relationships has created a greater sense of safety and belonging.

As the program moves forward, the Community Facilitator has an opportunity to build on a strong foundation. Making more connections with the wider community, initiating evening and weekend activities for people who work weekdays, and continuing to strengthen the sense of inclusion, belonging, and community are among the priorities for the next phase.

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