



BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

Vital Village Community Engagement Network

Vital Village is a network of residents and organizations committed to maximizing child and family well-being, and community wellness. Our place-based, community engagement network aims to mobilize collective investment from residents, community organizations (CBOs) and institutions to seed scalable and sustainable community change around child protection and promoting healthy socio-emotional development in early childhood.

The Vital Village Network is using a collective impact approach to supporting deeper collaboration among educators, clinicians, social service providers, legal advocates and residents to strengthen prenatal, early childhood education, and economic security and preventive legal resources that support family and community protective factors. We have developed hubs of innovation within and a formal collaborative network across three Boston Neighborhoods: Dudley (Roxbury/North Dorchester), Mattapan, and Codman Square (Dorchester).

We **align** preventive efforts across sectors to enhance existing services for children (school readiness initiatives, violence prevention strategies, health care systems). This approach is effective and sustainable because we **embed** community-driven preventive strategies in the context of existing systems for child health and education and community development. We strive to **connect and strengthen** opportunity structures that support protective factors and family strengths within existing community resources.

How Does A Collaborative Network Enhance Synergy?

Emerging understanding of the far-reaching consequences of toxic stressors on child development, health, and educational outcomes motivates innovative approaches that harness collective capacities. Our Network is developing a community of practice that mobilizes cross-sector collaborations, encourages collective learning, and cultivates stronger connections between community residents and community agencies in order to co-design and improve the community systems. We link learning and practice through an intentional improvement process, so that research insights are translated and inform practice and practical problems are rigorously studied. Our long-term goal is to pioneer a sustainable approach to setting-level improvements that enhance family and community protective factors and ultimately prevent and mitigate childhood adversities and promote optimal wellbeing.

What Do We Hope to Achieve?

We aim to deepen community engagement within, and grow the interdependence and scale of the Vital Village Network across three Boston neighborhoods. We have four main objectives to achieve our vision:

- 1. To support growth of a local community of practice to cultivate community settings which protect children from violence and optimally support their well-being.** We support leadership trajectories for community residents to build collective capacity, and link learning to practice within innovation hubs driven by iterative learning processes, collaborative inquiry, and community-based evaluation.
- 2. To improve the quality of data and tools which allow community residents and community institutions to promote family and community safety.** We leverage existing data systems to establish benchmarks for assessing the well-being of children and use them to catalyze community engagement and accountability.
- 3. To cultivate social networks which provide meaningful opportunities in daily life for socio-emotional learning and build family resilience and community prosperity.** We support peer-to-peer advocacy, youth civic participation, and cultivate regular dialogue between community agencies and residents to increase collective engagement to build the geography of opportunity structures in neighborhoods.
- 4. To optimize the prosperity of Vital Village neighborhoods through peer-to-peer advocacy models to address social and material hardships using coordinated economic and preventive legal strategies.** We are scaling a model for building civic capacity and community member peer advocacy skill supported by local institutions.

For more information or to partner with us, please visit our website: vitalvillage.org

Our Partners

Action for Boston Community Development
Ambe's Glory
Birth Sisters -BMC
Boston Adult Technical Academy
BMC Domestic Violence Program
BMC Pediatric Primary Care Clinic
Boston Children's Museum
Boston Healthy Start Initiative – BPHC
Boston Housing Authority
Boston Police Department
Boston Public Health Commission
Boston Public Schools
Boston University School of Medicine
Brazelton Touchpoints Center
Casa Myrna
Catholic Charities
Centering Healthcare Institute
Centering Pregnancy Consortium
Child Witness to Violence Project
Children's Services of Roxbury
Children's Healthwatch
Children's Trust
City of Boston/Circle of Promise
Codman Square Health Center
Countdown to Kindergarten
Defending Childhood Initiative - BPHC
DotWell
Dudley Children Thrive
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
Ebenezer Baptist Church Social Action Committee

Father Friendly Initiative -BPHC
Fields Corner Thrive in Five
Haitian Health Initiative
Healthy Baby/Healthy Child - BPHC
Healthy Steps
Hike4Life
Interaction Institute for Social Change
Lee Academy Pilot School
LIFT-Boston
Louis D Brown Peace Institute
Magnolia Place Community Initiative
Mattahunt Community Center
Mattahunt Elementary School
Mattapan Community Health Center
Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
Medical Legal Partnership – Boston
Orchard Gardens Pilot School
Orchard Gardens Resident Association
Project Hope
Race and Equity Coalition
Smart from the Start
Social Justice Mediation Institute
SPARK Center - BMC
Thrive in Five
Trinity Management/Orchard Gardens
Upham's Corner Health Center
Violence Intervention Project –BPHC
Whittier Street Health Center
YMCA-Huntington Avenue Teen Center
Youth and Family Enrichment Services
Youth Jobs Coalition



Vital Village Community Engagement Network
www.vitalvillage.org

Boston Medical Center/Boston University School of Medicine

88 East Newton Street
Boston, MA 02118

vitalvillage@bmc.org