



A Comprehensive Focus Group Analysis on Assistance and Supports Provided and Their Helpfulness at PSF Family Resource Centers

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Focus Group Methods

As part of a broader evaluation effort, the utilization of focus groups of patrons receiving services and supports at each of the project family resource centers (FRC) was proposed to help answer general questions related to fidelity of services and supports to the protective factor model, the reach of FRCs' efforts, and implementation drivers, solutions, and barriers. The FRCs include the Cone Park Library Resource Center (CPLRC), the Library Partnership Resource Center (LPRC), the SWAG Family Resource Center (SWAG FRC), and the NorthStar Family Resource Center (NSFRC). Please note, although initially identified as "focus groups" within the evaluation plan, the phrase "patron feedback groups" was substituted for these efforts following consultation with evaluation team members and advisory groups (that included patrons) that suggested the revised group reference would be more engaging and inviting for prospective members¹.

Detailed information related to the methodology guiding the sample selection of patrons to participate and other procedures and limitations associated with the evaluation design can be found in a separate brief (see Perry et.al, 2024). Further, a separate guide was produced that highlighted in detail the processes and protocols utilized in forming and facilitating the patron feedback groups and the structure for the content analysis, results of which are detailed in this report (see Institute for Child and Family Services Research, 2023). In sum, patron participants were randomly sampled to participate from a sampling frame of patrons that consented to participate in the formal evaluation. The selection was stratified across PSF Family Resource Centers with two groups per FRC. Efforts were made to secure between 6 and 10 participants per group with 75% of participants serving as caregivers of children (an additional stratum for

¹ Methodological and planning considerations were still guided by theory, principles and protocols associated with the term "focus groups" and other qualitative/narrative approaches for planning, implementation/data collection, and content analyses found with the normative/professional literature.

selection) given that one of the objectives (among others) of the evaluation is to assess the effect of FRCs in their capacity to prevent maltreatment and family involvement with child welfare systems. Although focus patron feedback groups are FRC specific (and analyses can be stratified by FRC), patrons at each were asked the same questions. Some commonalities of perspective across FRC focus groups were identified that permit an aggregation of findings (and identification of an aggregate content saturation level) in select analyses denoted in this and other reports.

Questions for Patron Feedback Groups

The generation and final selection of questions to be asked with each feedback group was multifaceted and involved a few iterations. First, draft questions were constructed in consultation and brainstorming with other project staff, project implementation team members, and select PSF and FRC administrators. Following refinements to these questions, feedback, edits, and question suggestions were solicited via survey methods from key stakeholders that have been a source of information and consultation for other process evaluation activities. These individuals included program managers at each FRC, as well as members of each FRC Strengthening Family Self-Assessment (SFSA) teams (which include patrons/community ambassadors, key program staff and volunteers, and collaborative partners from the community). Although the survey was made available in electronic format, it was also available in paper form, upon request. One group of respondents—members of the Cone Park Research Advisory Council —met in-person as a group to discuss each question and provide feedback on the content and structure of select questions. The responses from surveyed stakeholders were reviewed, tallied, and summarized. At least one question originally aligned with each protective factor was chosen for inclusion for feedback group procedures deemed to be of highest rated value to “...best understanding patrons' experiences at, and the impact of, each family resource center.” (Perry, Lancaster, & Pegram, 2024).

The final set of questions (and associated sub-questions) included the following:

1. How does [FRC name] assist individuals and families with immediate needs?
2. What resources and supports do they provide?

Have they been helpful?

3. Were the activities and programs welcoming and inclusive? Did they make families feel comfortable interacting with others and participating in activities?
4. When interacting with staff, are you listened to and supported?

Do you think program staff are willing to work collaboratively with you to support your child(ren)'s development?

5. When thinking about yourself or other caregivers in the community, did the services and events at the resource center help manage stress?

Did these services help you to better deal with the demands of parenting during stressful times?

6. What additional services do you need as a caregiver to better cope with everyday stressors? What additional services do you need to cope with the stressors in your community?
7. Do program activities support your children's social and emotional development?
8. Do you think that [FRC name] resources have helped caregivers in the community from being involved with the child welfare system?
9. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences with [insert FRC name]?

This report highlights findings generated from discussions associated with the first two questions. Content and thematic analyses¹ focused on the aggregation of responses across both

¹ See Perry, Lancaster, & Pegram (2024) for more details on theory and methods guiding this process.

these questions. This occurred given processes that were manifested within the feedback groups. The first question was answered by participants considering their personal knowledge of services and supports they received, for which participants had reflections and opinions on their helpfulness (a focus of the second question). Since members of the first few patron feedback groups answered these questions concurrently, subsequent feedback groups asked these questions together or suggested consideration of both sets of questions during the facilitated conversation.

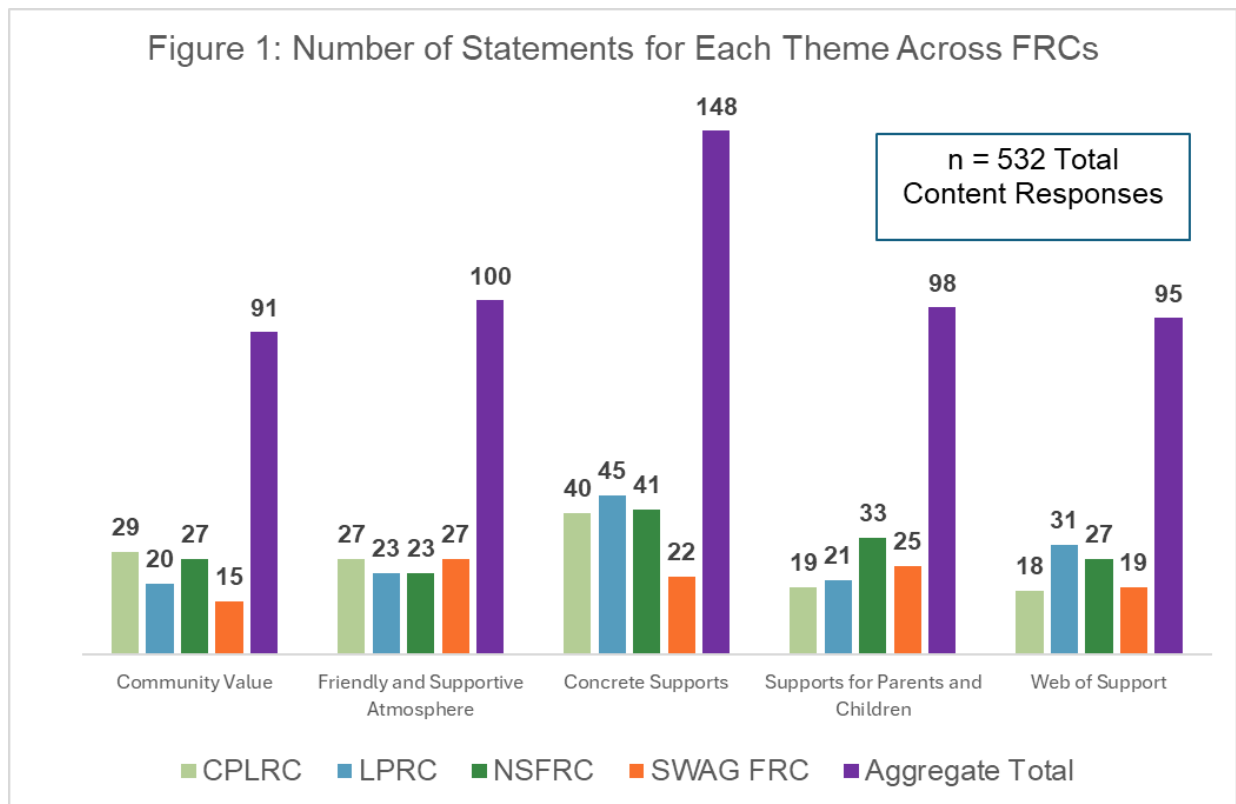
Services and Supports Provided and Their Helpfulness

This report is an analysis of patron answers across all FRCs to the questions: *How does [FRC name] assist individuals and families with immediate needs? What resources and supports do they provide? Have they been helpful?*

Responses to these questions were detailed and comprehensive. After the content analysis of recorded transcripts, five overall themes of responses were identified. These themes related to the *Community Value* of the FRCs, focused on the *Friendly & Supportive Atmosphere* within the FRCs, *Concrete Supports* provided, *Supports for Parents and Children* provided, and what was conceptualized as a *Web of Support* that was facilitated by involvement with the FRCs.

Figure 1 itemizes the frequency count of each theme represented by statements of those who attended patron feedback groups across each FRC. Please note that a captured statement may be as short as a word or affirmative agreement (in response to another person's statement) or as long as a paragraph with multiple statements. Select statements by individuals may contain content that reflects multiple themes. For example, although 228 unique statements were transcribed that reflect responses to these questions, content analyses identified 532 instances of established themes being represented by these statements. The total count of statements for each theme is stratified by FRC. Each theme content embodies subthemes listed and described at the beginning of each applicable themes section within this report. Figure 1 provides the sum of content statements for each theme broken down by FRC along with the aggregate total of each

theme. The count of statements demonstrates some level of commonality of importance/relevance of select themes across FRCs.



Among the 532 content responses to these questions, the theme most represented (using aggregate data) related to Concrete Supports ($n = 148$ or 27.8% of all thematic responses). There was relatively uniform distribution in the aggregate number of statements representing each of the other themes, from a low of 91 (17.1%) for *Community Value* to a high of 100 (18.8%) comments representing the theme that spoke to the *Friendly and Support Atmosphere* at the FRCs.

The theme of *Community Value* is represented by content and subthemes that highlighted the impact of the FRCs within the community, their accessibility, the efficiency of operations toward addressing identified need, the perceived value of the FRCs, and the value of collaboration in the provision of services and supports, especially with and through community partners.

The theme of *Friendly and Supportive Atmosphere* is represented by content and subthemes that highlight how: the FRCs are friendly, warm, and safe environments; the general helpfulness (at an individual and community level) of the FRCs; and that services are offered in a non-judgmental, supportive, and/or reliable manner by staff that are attentive, responsive, and patient. Other content focused on the interpersonal support received (including with and between patrons) and the qualitative or general positive impact of the atmosphere/environment of service provision.

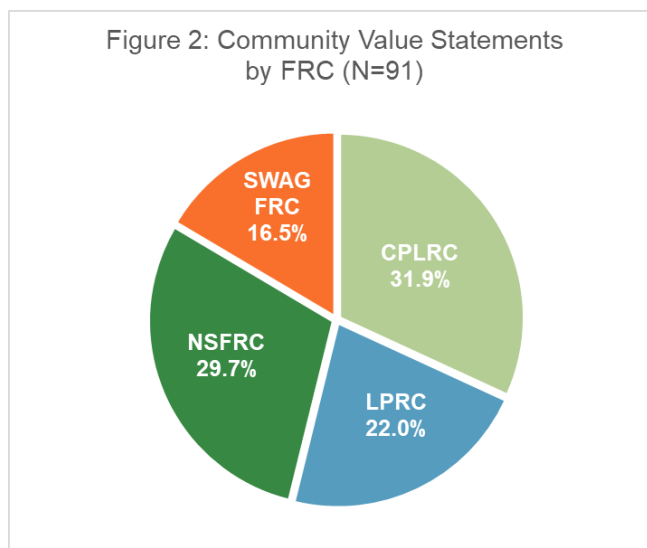
The theme of *Concrete Supports* includes the identification of a host of services and supports classified as concrete supports at each FRC (e.g., food distribution, clothing closet, faxing, notary, baby items, transportation assistance, rent/utility support, school supplies, holiday assistance, etc.). This theme is also represented by comments that reflect upon the general and specific needs identified within the communities served for concrete supports and the response of the FRCs to address these needs.

The theme of *Supports for Parents and Children* focus on content and embodies subthemes related to services and supports that promote parental resilience and the social and emotional well-being of children. What was identified as a *Web of Support* theme represented content and subthemes that spoke to the opportunities for and the value of relationships and connectedness, including social relationships, and the development of quality relationships with staff and between patrons. These relationships and connections may be a secondary impact or benefit of other services and support received. Additional comments included within this theme focused on the value and benefit of expanding the reach of the FRCs, promoting social connections, and reciprocal supportive relationships among patrons.

Theme One: Community Value of Family Resource Centers

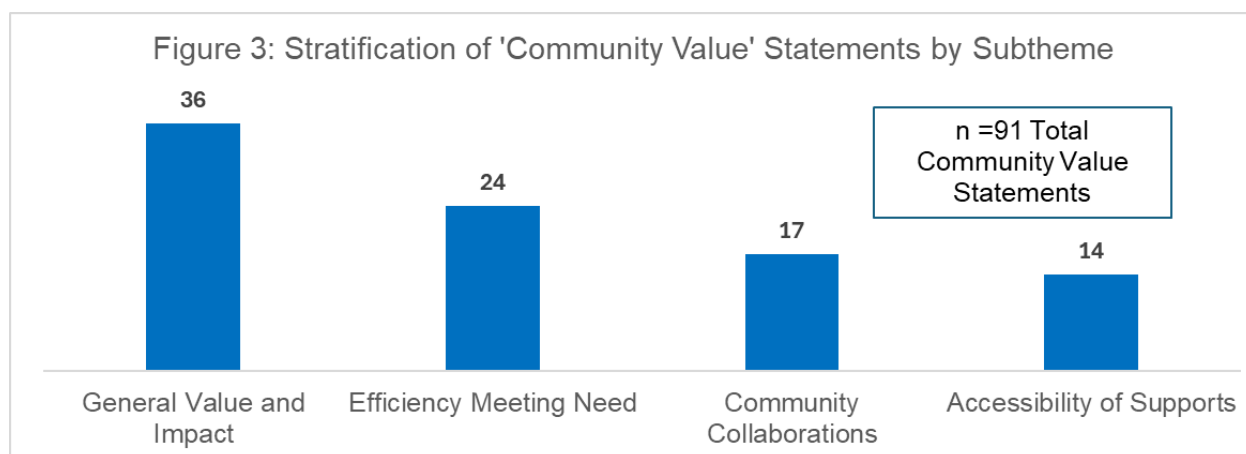
The theme of *Community Value* is represented by content and subthemes that highlight the impact of the FRCs within the community, their accessibility, and the efficiency of

operations toward addressing identified needs. This theme also addressed the perceived value of the FRCs, and the value of collaboration in the provision of services and supports, especially with and through community partners.



There was a total of 91 content statements associated with a theme of community value for which 31.9% (n = 29) were generated from patron participants at CPLRC, 29.7% (n = 27) at NSFRC, 22.0% (n = 20) at LPRC, and 16.5% (n = 15) at SWAG FRC (see Figure 2). Comments were affiliated with six individual patron participants at CPLRC (with one additional multiple/collective participant response), eight patron participants at NSFRC, four patron participants at LPRC, and four at SWAG FRC.

The community value of the FRCs was manifested in several ways, leading to distinct subthemes that emerged during the content analyses. These subthemes of value reflected statements that highlighted the general value and impact of the FRCs (n = 36), efficiency of operations in addressing need (n = 24), collaboration with community partners (n = 17), and the accessibility of services and supports (n = 14) (see Figure 3).



General Value and Impact of the FRCs

Among the 91 statements, there were 36 statements that commented upon the general value of the FRCs and their impact. Sometimes these statements were made as preambles or summary comments to a more specific itemization of services and support received or reflected upon. Examples of select statements that reflected the general impact on individual patrons and/or their family(ies) include the following:

“Yes, it's, it's a great, I mean I just love this library because it helps me...”

“...it's just a wonderful program. I love it. I love it.”

“...what they are doing now is exceptional, is good.”

“...I've used just any resource that has been available to me, and it's all been just incredible... makes me feel good about myself.”

“it's [the FRC], it's great.”

“I mean, I am so grateful for this place. I mean it's like oh-h just let me get to the Partnership.”

“...like I come there [the FRC] for everything.”

“Y'all help with everything.”

“...they were so thankful [for the FRC] because they had been everywhere else and couldn't get anything.”

“I've never walked in here and felt like I wasn't welcome.”

“Even being in the rough neighborhood, I found...mothers coming together...with our children and strengthening our families, that's, that's what it's about...”

“So it's very...very resourceful, very, very good...It's [CPLRC] better than 211...”

“I'm just so grateful for this resource.”

“I'm so grateful for the resource [center] and I know others can use it too.”

For one patron, the value and impact of the FRC (SWAG FRC) was profound, providing the supports and resources that ensured they wouldn't be homeless:

“I didn't want to go homeless, I couldn't get homeless, I didn't want to be homeless, so I had to come here every day.”

Several general statements of perceived value, focused on the influence and benefit of FRCs for the community, for example:

“...it's [an] awesome resource to have in town.”

“Yeah, very good for community as well, you know.”

...you know, [LPRC] is a benefit...[to]...the community; to have people that are trying to do something good with their life and to get that help, you know it's good for the whole, it's good for all of Gainesville, really. Not just this little area, but you know it's an important resource for the community.

“The SWAG is a great resource... resource... community resource place to come.”

“Yeah, very good for community as well, you know.”

“...it's good to have it [NSFRC] in this community.”

“That the library [CPLRC] itself is, is a great, you know, asset to the, to the community...”

“...so, I think it's very- these services they [LPRC] provide are very essential to the community.”

A few patrons (with others agreeing) highlighted the importance of the FRCs maintaining a sustained influence in the community, even expanding reach:

“...the resource center...needs to stay...”

“I just think...the services that have been rendered is very good and I just would like to see that they keep on doing it...”

...I agree with these ladies that if it's something that continues, a good idea would be to reach out because I know for a fact there are more families out there in the you know, because you have your surrounding area, but there's others in Columbia County that definitely could use the services [at NSFRC]...

Unprompted, one patron that uses services at NSFRC asked questions about the continuation of services and supports beyond the grant period that funded the start-up of NSFRC in Lake City. This patron, and others, reiterated the importance of maintaining operations at NSFRC as a means of addressing individuals' and families' needs within the community served.

Efficiency of Operations in Addressing Need

An additional subtheme associated with community value highlighted the efficiency of operations in addressing identified needs of patrons and families within the community served. A total of 24 statements were linked with this subtheme. This subtheme was manifested typically within the context of an itemization of number, type, and manner of supports received, including a plethora of supports and resources linked to the provision of concrete support in times of need and promoting resilience (e.g., food, clothing, fax and computer use, transportation assistance, job searches, community referrals, and follow-up). The existing services and supports were perceived as responsive to identified needs within the community. One patron from CPLRC noted “*...there's a lot of things that you can actually do here...*” that can “*...ease you.*” These thoughts were paralleled by others, including a patron at NSFRC that reflected on back-to-school supports provided for children in the community that included all needed supplies listed by local schools, the effect of which was “*...you [parents] don't have to stress*” about a potential financial burden of school supply costs. This patron also reflected on the benefit of multiple resources being “*...all in one place.*” Another patron from SWAG FRC identified several resources and supports utilized (including computer use, job searches, transportation assistance, and utility assistance), commenting that the resource center “*...helped me navigate a lot of things*” and was responsive to needs that may not have been addressed adequately by others,

commenting “...hard working people like me get no help...this place is for help.” Efficiency at addressing identified needs of patrons was captured in a series of other statements, some of which highlight the attentiveness and responsiveness of staff:

...and immediately right then, they [staff at LPRC] got it taken care of. So, they are very helpful. They call ‘Hey, you got it taken care of? You need this? Let me know,’ and they gave me all of the resources I needed ... social services ... help with the utilities, the rent, and the clothes, food ...

The personal connection ... it does feel you have that personal connection. You guys [NSFRC] do what you can to either help or make sure we can get someone here to help ... it does make it make a difference and it is a very important thing.

So, like, a lot of times, you'll get the 2-1-1 sheet, and they'll tell you ‘Oh [you] got to go online’, and I'm a person with sight issues, it's not always easy to navigate new applications ... the library doesn't always want to help you. I found out that SWAG is where you can go. When 2-1-1 tells you go online and apply for the utility assistance or go online and apply for social services ... I came here ... then I learned of all the other things; like the clothing closet, the food, and utility [assistance].

She's [CPLRC staff member] sweet and she make it so fast for me. Just go there to fax something and be so quick and I'll be like, OK, that's done. That's it. So. It's like, it's quick ... and very helpful as well.

The manager at CPLRC was praised for her level of responsiveness and proactive engagement with patrons to ensure that all their needs are addressed:

...open door policy; she, you know, ...has her door open where you can call... she had the link up ... to help people get their ID, just something simple...you need to get an ID because...not having an ID prevents you from [getting] everything, you know... when she sees a program out there then she puts it out there for everybody to see...like...this is something to help you manage your finances, do you need help with your bills? ... here's some other resources that you can go to...I think she she's good at keeping her eyes open for different...resources out there to share with the community.

In terms of efficiency, the FRCs were perceived as reliable resources to address needs, where select resources could be obtained:

“...there’s always food [at LPRC] ...I’ve never been turned away...I’ve always gotten food.”

“...like when my friend needs some diapers for her baby because she had just come from out of town. I told her come to Ms. [name of CPLRC staff]”

“[I’ve] been around the neighborhood, I find that a lot of people... think SWAG is a good place... You know to assist people in transportation because they [SWAG FRC] be down here.”

“He needs pampers... came right here, was able to get Pampers. We're able to get Ensure milk. Until we got his WIC thing going and stuff, everything [was] right here [CPLRC], there's no problem.”

When I was in a homeless shelter, that's where I found out about this place. [NSFRC] was an integral part of getting out of the homeless shelter because I was able to use the computer and apply for housing... I was able to get back on my feet because I had access to the Internet and a printer and a notary...I could get everything done that I needed to get done...

“My butt would be naked, and I’d be starving if it wasn’t for you guys [LPRC], I’m serious.”

Collaboration with Community Partners

Another subtheme was represented by 17 comments that highlighted the value of collaboration with partners within the community for the provision of services and supports. Collaborations involved the provision of services on-site by, as well as referrals and follow-up to other service providers within the community. Specific collaborations¹ highlighted included those with local schools, food distribution sites, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare (for mental health and wellness issues), the Department of Children and Families, Health Street (operated by the University of Florida), Three Rivers Legal Services, and Alachua Resource Center. Patrons spoke favorably of the referral processes engaged in across the FRCs, the availability of information regarding other resources in the community, and the willingness to facilitate referrals and bring these resources on site to assist with individual patron needs or specific events (e.g., health fairs). As one patron noted, the FRCs “...know where to go for other community resources” and another highlighted how the FRCs “...advertise for other agencies...” effectively. A few comments, however, highlighted a value or need to disseminate more

¹ You can learn more about the extensive collaborations of community providers with FRCs here: <https://www.pfsf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-Service-Providers.pdf>

information (or “...do more talking...”) about the FRCs within the community with more collaboration with faith-based community organizations.

Accessibility of Services and Supports

A fourth subtheme aligned with the community value theme, focused on the accessibility of services and supports provided at the FRCs. There were 14 comments that addressed accessibility. Nine of these comments reinforced that the FRCs location in communities/neighborhoods in need allowed for the provision of valued resources and supports that many families would not have had access to otherwise. Access to food supports was mentioned a few times especially at the FRCs located in neighborhoods described as “*food deserts*”. A patron from CPLRC commented:

...it's actually a great asset to this community and people use it. So, a lot of people ain't got no reason to say that they're hungry ...if you use your resources. They're here, they're right here, you know. Nobody got no reason to say they need this or that because they can get up and come this way...

Another patron emphasized:

...the resource center is a big part of ... the community that may not have other resources. I mean, if somebody has a full-time job and they make lots of money, they don't really care. But people who are struggling, who have kids, going through divorce, or, you know, have lost a job, or COVID, or somebody sick or, you know, the average person needs resources, and they need to know that they're available, especially when children are involved...

The convenience of placing the FRCs within walking distance of households served was highlighted, especially for those individuals and families that don't have easy access to transportation. One patron expressed appreciation for the SWAG FRC and other SWAG supports establishing a presence in their neighborhood, isolated from other supports within Gainesville city limits:

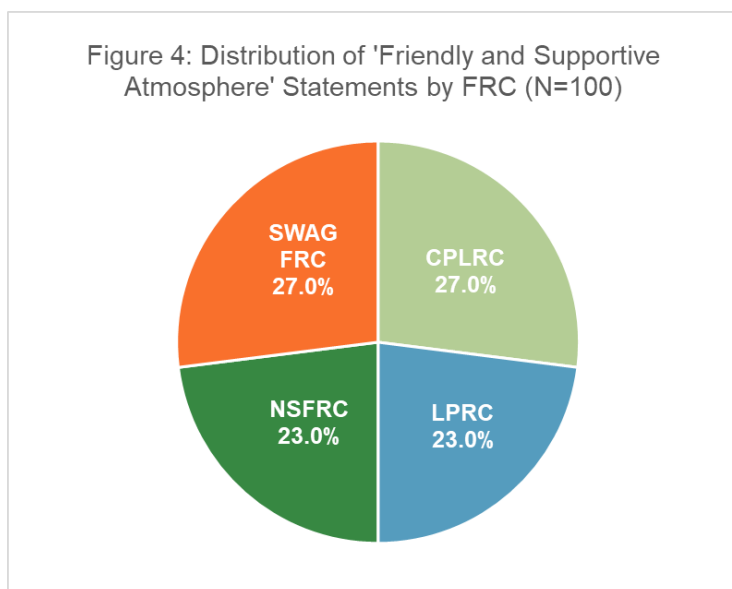
...nobody wanted to be involved with Holly Heights, Linton Oaks, Majestic Oaks, Tyler Oaks, forget it... Nobody wanted to be around them, because all it was about drugs and gangs and all that stuff. It still is, but it's changed [because of SWAG and SWAG FRC] ...

On several occasions, patrons noted the stigma associated with some of the neighborhoods the FRCs are located in (e.g., impoverished, crime issues, etc.) and highlighted that the non-judgmental and supportive attitude of staff and environment enhanced engagement and the likelihood that services and supports would be accessed by those in need. Patrons were not stigmatized for having needs or for seeking help and asking questions:

*“I’ve been to other places, **not here**, ...that...looked at you like you had three heads when you asked a question because you didn’t know.”*

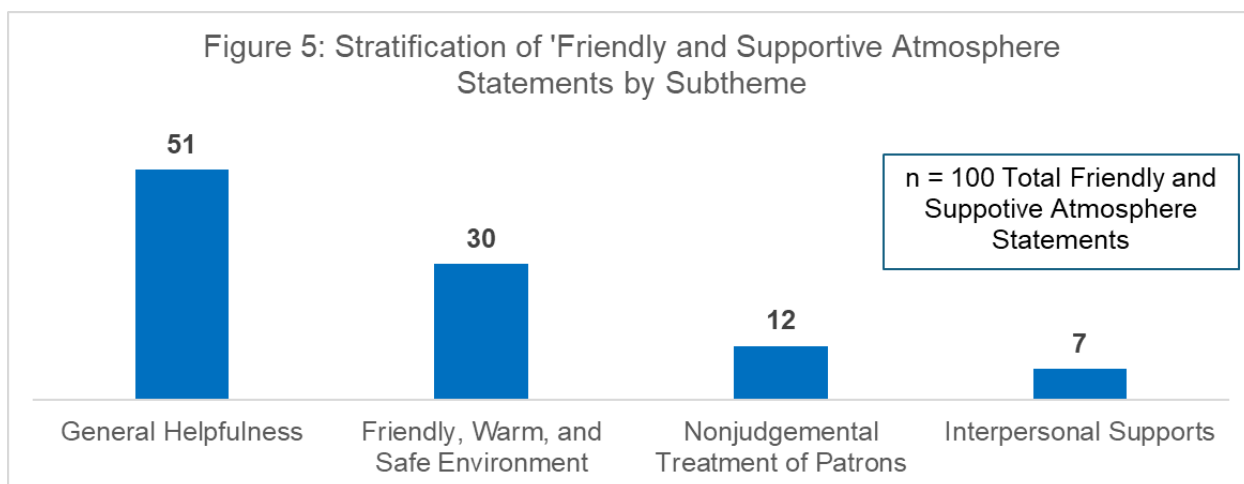
Theme Two: Friendly and Supportive Atmosphere of Family Resource Centers

The theme of *Friendly and Supportive Atmosphere* is represented by content and subthemes that highlight how: The FRCs are friendly, warm, and safe environments; the general helpfulness of the FRCs at an individual and community level; and, that services are offered in a non-judgmental, supportive, and/or reliable manner by staff that are attentive, responsive, and patient. Other content focused on the interpersonal support received from FRC staff and other patrons alike, and the qualitative or generally positive impact of the environment in regard to service provision.



There was a total of 100 content statements that were associated with the theme of friendly and supportive atmosphere for which 27% (n = 27) were generated from patron

participants at the CPLRC, 27% (n = 27) at the SWAG FRC, 23% (n = 23) at the NSFRC, and 23% (n = 23) at the LPRC (see Figure 4). Comments were affiliated with seven individual patron participants at CPLRC (with one additional multiple/collective participant response), five patron participants at NSFRC, three patron participants at LPRC, and six at SWAG FRC. Descriptions of how friendly and supportive the atmosphere was at the FRCs when services and supports were delivered was manifested in several ways or via subthemes that emerged during the content analyses. These subthemes reflected statements that highlighted the general helpfulness of staff and services (n = 51), the friendly, warm, and safe environment at the FRCs, (n = 30), the non-judgmental treatment of patrons (n = 12), and the quality of interpersonal support received (n = 7).



General Helpfulness of Staff and Services

The subtheme most indicative of a friendly and supportive environment was represented by statements highlighting the general helpfulness of the FRCs and the different services and supports provided across categories of protective factors. A total of 51 statements highlighted how helpful the staff and services are; and the ability of patrons to get the help they need. Patrons noted (some examples, with similar comments manifested repeatedly) that staff “...are very good and helpful,” “...great with helping people,” “...so...very helpful,” “...helped me out,” “help you,” and are “...lending a helping hand.” Sometimes, specific examples of

services received (e.g., concrete supports, tutoring/education assistance, job assistance, utility assistance, etc.) were noted with a comment highlighting that these experiences were helpful. There was no instance where a specific service or support provided was deemed not helpful, although, it was stated a couple of times that there may be occasions when the FRC doesn't provide the type of help needed but still attempts to assist and listen to the patron; as one patron notes: *"Sometimes they have help, sometimes not, but they listen to you. That help[s] you a lot when you can talk and bring out your situation..."*

Mostly, there was uniform praise across FRC patron feedback groups in terms of the helpfulness of the FRCs. One patron likened the SWAG FRC to a group of superheroes that provide needed help while empowering those they help to be self-sufficient:

So, SWAG has kind of been that Justice League. Because when you come to them, you like "look I need a little bit of help", they don't just give you something, they show you how to [get help and help yourself] ... to be your own hero.

Another patron highlights how the value of feeling helped enhances a working relationship with staff, noting staff may *"...look at the total picture [of the problem] and help you with the total picture and then you get closer when you feel that someone helps you."*

Friendly, Warm, and Safe Environment at the FRCs

A second subtheme focused on select attributes and descriptions of service provision as being friendly and warm, and within a safe setting. A total of 30 content statements reflected this subtheme. Here, focus centered primarily on interactions and communications with staff across all FRCs (for example):

"The communication with the staff here is very nice. Everybody [is] calming and relax all the problem."

"The people here have been incredible, like they just are so patient."

"[Staff member] is great with helping people.... and the people in the library they are, I've not met a person that had attitude...and...so, that's the main thing..."

"They greet you with a smile.....a warm welcome and direct you to where you need to go. You need help...they don't have attitude...it's great."

“The staff are, like, very courteous, and they joke with you. They even joke with my grandson when he’s screaming his head off [speaker laughs]...I am so grateful for this place.”

“You don’t feel pressured, you don’t feel looked down upon when you come in here with your issues.”

“...it is welcoming. You know, people feel comfortable coming in...”

“...they greet you with a smile.”

“[They greet you with] a warm welcome, yes.”

...as soon as we walk through the door...it’s not even “hey, hello”. They introduce you by your name. They get to know every single person that comes through the doors. So, I love it. They know my name, they know my daughter’s name, from a mile away...

“For me, it’s very nice all the time.”

These warm and friendly interactions with staff expand to broader praise of staff and their ability to connect with patrons and develop meaningful working relationships:

“Honey, everybody here at SWAG is lovely people and I love them... Yeah, everybody here is lovely, and they keep you happy.”

“I love them too; they were awesome too.”

“[Staff] wanna be here”

“The staffs’ so great”

“[Staff] make you want to come in and sit down.”

“She’s [referring to a staff member] a very nice lady. She’s sweet...”

“[Staff are] just like family.”

“She [staff member] was a sweetheart.”

“...everybody’s very nice...”

“...and they call you; [be]cause they call me, they call you, and I love that of them”

“...they have that one-on-one connection... [that makes a patron] feel more comfortable and you know, sharing what their need is.”

One patron praised how staff maintain a friendly and professional disposition even when dealing with unruly or unappreciative patrons noting “...*the staff is very good. The people is the pain.*” These comments reinforce the importance of quality interactions and connections between staff and patrons to develop meaningful working relationships and a supportive environment. In addition to the qualitative praise of staff, select comments highlighted that FRCs were safe places for patrons (including children), and a refuge in the summer from the heat since the FRC has air conditioning, and the patrons may not in their household.

Non-judgmental Treatment of Patrons

A set of 12 statements on factors contributing to a friendly and supportive atmosphere at the FRCs focused on the non-judgmental treatment of patrons. These sentiments were expressed for each FRC. Multiple patrons that use the CPLRC specifically mentioned the name of the program manager and her non-judgmental attitude and respectful treatment of all those that sought assistance, associating these influences with making the environment at the CPLRC “*wonderful.*” One patron noted: “...*and may I add, that's another reason why it's a great place because ... the people that work here, they don't judge you.*” A patron that uses the SWAG FRC praised how all those requesting service (e.g., food distribution) are treated in the same manner without stigma, commenting “... [SWAG FRC staff] *don't care what they [any patron] do, they can come here and ... we'll still serve em ... [they're] gonna treat them the same way [they] treat all of them.*” These sentiments were reflected in other FRC feedback groups. A NSFRC patron highlighted: “...*you don't feel pressured, you don't feel looked down upon when you come in here with your issues.*” A patron (a grandparent/caregiver) from the LPRC expanded:

...nobody's like looking at me like [speaker makes a growling sound] or [saying] get out of here, that's huge. I feel welcome and my grandkids like it, they have fun too when they come and that's a big deal for a caregiver, because if the kids aren't happy, the caregiver is stressed, trust me. I've seen people come in ... and the staff member will ask them, “well, what is it that you need to do? They walk them through it and don't make them feel stupid ... I've been to other places, not

here, but you know other resources that, you know, looked at you like you had three heads when you asked a question ... continuing later ...

If my grandkids--aren't happy, or if they're needy, then I'm not going to be able to relax. [At CPLRC] ... I feel better. I can relax ... nobody's getting irritated because I have a kid, you know? Because a lot of places you go to take care of official business...they don't want no part of that, kids screaming. Take the kid out. Never mind you've been standing in line for two hours or whatever. They don't care ... here it's a total different atmosphere. They do care.

The importance of maintaining a non-judgmental attitude when supporting those with needs was emphasized by a patron at NSFRC:

...it's already hard enough to swallow your pride and ask for help when you can't provide for your family or you have a need ... [When] ... you're not feeling so much judgment, then you can be more open to learn ... I do think that's important.

Quality of Interpersonal Supports

Finally, there were seven statements relating to the provision of a friendly and supportive environment that reflected on the opportunity to develop and the quality of interpersonal supports with staff and other patrons. Select comments regarding staff highlighted “communication with the staff here is very nice” denoting how such communication is “calming” and helps “relax” a situation when dealing with a problem necessitating a service or support request. The attentiveness of a staff member at the CPLRC was spoken to at length when a patron reflected on the level of active engagement and caring disposition of a staff member when the patron was pregnant and initially felt “embarrassed” about reaching out for help but “...they [staff] made me feel...okay...” about seeking and receiving assistance and helping her realize she was not alone in her circumstances: “I feel kind of a little better knowing that I'm not the only one who is like this type of situation. So that really helped a lot...”

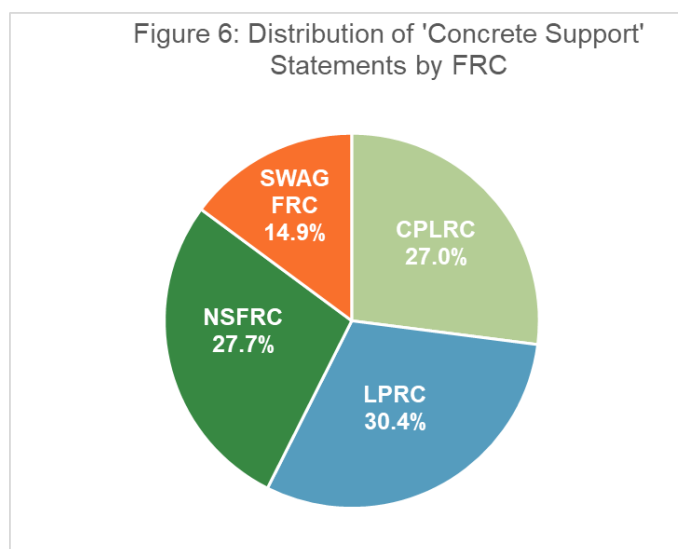
The remaining comments spoke to the opportunity to connect with and develop interpersonal relationships with other patrons, sometimes via organized events or as a byproduct of circumstantial interactions with other patrons, for example:

...a lot of people was here so ... a lot of people were from the neighborhood ... just came in. I guess they came in for other services and saw that they were offering coffee and doughnuts ... You know, people feel comfortable coming in ... there's a lot of people in here that I didn't know and ...we introduced ourselves, you know, and that's very important. I've been in this neighborhood for years ... I mean, over 10 years ... I could count the number of people that I actually know by name ... I just didn't associate with people like that. But now, a lot of people know me ...

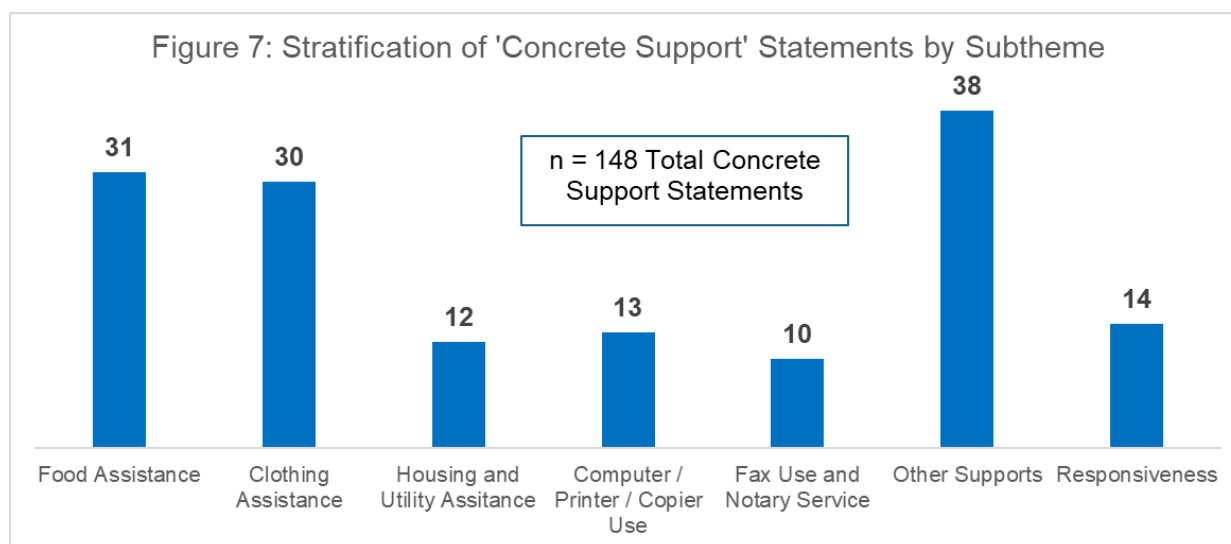
The opportunity to interact with others, outside of the home, was seen as a form of respite for some patrons where value existed in coming to the FRC to find “...someone to talk to, just come in and clear your mind.” Another SWAG patron noted: “...I'll come over here and just be like “phew”. Just relax for a couple of minutes. I got somebody I could talk to you know for a couple of minutes and kind of distress ...”

Theme Three: Concrete Supports Received from the FRCs

The theme of *Concrete Supports* includes the identification of a host of services and support classified as concrete supports that were received at each FRC. This theme is also represented by comments/content that reflects upon the general and specific needs identified within the communities served for concrete supports and the response of the FRCs to address these needs. In total, there were 148 statements that highlighted concrete support received. This includes 45 statements (30.4%) affiliated with the LPRC patrons, 41 (27.7%) from the NSFRC patrons, and 40 (27.0%) and 22 (14.9%) affiliated with the CPLRC and the SWAG FRC patrons respectively. Comments were affiliated with six individual patron participants at CPLRC, eight patron participants at NSFRC, four patron participants at LPRC, and four at SWAG FRC.



These were classified as subthemes focused on food assistance (individual and event; n = 31 statements); clothing assistance (n = 30); housing/rent and utility assistance (n = 13); computer/printer/copier use (n = 13); fax use and notary services (n = 10); and other supports (n = 38) representing a combination of several concrete supports (e.g., holiday assistance such as Thanksgiving baskets, pet care/food assistance, school supplies, flyer/calendar, job board, etc.). There was a final subtheme that included comments (n = 14) that highlighted the responsiveness that specific provided supports were to identified need (see Figure 7).



Food Assistance

A total of 13 (of 31) food assistance statements were attributed to patrons from the CPLRC, with an equal number of 6 statements attributed to patrons at each of the three other FRCs. Across all groups, 19 participants (6 from the CPLRC, 5 from the NSFRC, 4 from the LPRC, and 4 from the SWAG FRC) mentioned one or more specific food provision supports received; frequently within the context of an itemization or list of all concrete supports received. Food insecurity issues were denoted to exist in the communities served, and select comments reinforced the value and necessity of food provision through the FRCs, directly or indirectly through a partner organization/food bank or community service brought onsite or through a facilitated connection with other food resources in the community:

I have a few relatives, an aunt, and a cousin that benefits from the food program and they come here, and they get ... food to help them out through the rest of the month ... it's just a wonderful program. I love it. I love it.

"...it's like so much stress reliever [CPLRC] when it comes down to money and food with my kids."

...they give like information, like for shelters and stuff like that ... places that give out... food and stuff out there. So that's helpful to us as ... most people probably be low on food ... You're like, okay, I can go to this place at this time and pick up a little bit food or something like that; helpful as well.

Thank God for... the food bank. When they do their Friday food giveaways [at LPRC] and stuff, sometimes I can't get on the list, but when I show up at 4 o'clock, I've never been turned away. They have always given me food, and I'm not able to get food stamps, so that's huge for me too. I mean, if it weren't for the food bank, I would be a lot skinnier [speaker laughs].

Alright, I get my food stamps at the beginning of the month. My kids eat you out of house and home. I got three growing babies. I got a six-year-old...and five, four-year-old. They eat... [When there is] ... an event for a food drive I be like thank you Jesus, and I'll come right over here for food, and it will last me the rest of the month until I get my stamps again ... that's a crisis to me cause Jesus, they eat, they eat...

...that really helped me out a lot ... about the food situation ... I feel bad. Like we low on food, I got four kids. Embarrassed, I didn't want to come up [to CPLRC] because [of] ... my pride ... I got family to call but I didn't want to keep calling my family and asking for help. I could ... walk up here and get food. So, it's like I

kind of had to ... lower my standards down a little bit and come get stuff and ... they welcome you and stuff. They made me feel like okay...

...like I was saying earlier with the food situation my kids eat you out of house and home. It gets down to the last little food [staff member at CPLRC] comes right in time. So instead of me stressing about what they going to eat, it's already done ... I know with the food thing it definitely helped my family...

"Being able to come and get food and get help and get clothes and just having them be able to encourage me. It felt good."

Clothing Assistance

There were 30 statements that highlighted the use of clothing assistance across all the FRC patron participant groups. Of these, 14 were made by the LPRC patrons, 10 by the NSFRC patrons, and 3 (each) to patron participants affiliated with the SWAG FRC and the CPLRC. The use of clothing assistance (e.g., the "Clothing Closet") was frequently cited as a priority need concurrent with the need for food assistance and other concrete supports. For some, the need for clothes or food served as the first introduction to an FRC, and led to the realization and utilization of a variety of other services and supports:

Well for me, ... I didn't start really coming here until like 2018-2019 ...when I first came, I was helped with the clothing closet. [Then] I was helped with summer camp ... after school tutoring ... COVID started ... and I had the kid going into kindergarten, so it was a safe place for him to socialize with his peers ...It was a place with adult supervision. And then ... I learned ... they got food, they help you fill out for the utility assistance.

Clothing assistance was seen as a benefit for adult patrons, immediate and extended family members, and children:

"Because my daughter right now is going through a divorce, and he left her with nothing ... Thank God for the clothes closet because they'd be naked right now otherwise."

You know, I'll get some new clothes, you know ... actually my grandkids' Christmas presents came from the clothes closet. I wouldn't have had it otherwise ... they were grateful. They're not snobby kids, they're just grateful to have clean clothes to put on and food to eat ... I'm just so grateful for this resource.

"... the clothing closet is helpful in that I come, and I get clothes and I ... distribute it to family and friends ...I also give some [to] people at the nursing homes..."

I mean that's pretty much it' like I've used just any resource that has been available to me, and it's all been just incredible ... every time they've had the clothes ...come ... I've basically been able to get like a whole new wardrobe without, you know, spending money that I don't even have and that's like, makes me feel good about myself.

Housing/Rent and Utility Assistance

An additional 12 statements focused on the receipt of housing/rent and utility assistance.

Six mentions of these concrete supports were highlighted in feedback groups at the LPRC, three (each) at the NSFRC and the SWAG FRC, and there was one mention at the CPLRC.

Collectively, 8 of the 12 statements focused on assistance provided directly or indirectly (facilitating a referral and/or advocacy) for utility assistance without much expansion of thought.

Housing assistance was sometimes linked with the value of free computer use at the FRCs as such allowed patrons to “...apply for housing” ... “apply for HUD housing.”

Computer/Printer/Copier Use

Free computer/printer/copier use was additionally the focus of 13 statements with 7 highlighted in feedback groups at the NSFRC, 3 at the CPLRC, 2 at the SWAG FRC and 1 at the LPRC. As with housing and utility assistance, these supports were typically listed with others as received by select patrons and valued by those that didn't have access to these resources in their household. Access to computers, the Internet, printers and copiers was deemed of value for ensuring other concrete support and household needs were met. This included completing online applications for housing, setting up electronic benefit transfers, conducting job searches, and seeking out other resources within the community:

[NSFRC] ... was an integral part of getting out of the homeless shelter because I was able to use the computer and apply for housing and apply ... for EBT [electronic benefit transfer] and like I was able to get back on my feet because I had access to ... the internet and a printer and a notary...I could get everything done that I needed to get done that I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise.

“I don't have a computer myself, so I came here to apply for HUD housing. I came here to apply for EBT...I've been using all the resources that they'll give me and it's been incredibly helpful.”

“I feel having a place to come... [to use] ... the computers, being able to have the connections to other services.”

“I remember several times I've come here [SWAG FRC] to use the computer [for] job searches.”

Fax and Notary Services

Free access to fax and notary services were mentioned 10 times, 8 of which specifically mentioned the value of using the fax machine to send applications, “*paperwork*” or documents to other agencies or providers (e.g., social service, government, healthcare, etc.). A patron at the NSFRC commented (1 of 2 comments made) that the availability of a notary (a staff member is a notary) whose service is free to patrons is an “*...awesome resource to have in town.*”

Other Concrete Supports

There were a series of statements (38 instances) where other concrete supports were identified by patrons that they had utilized. These included the receipt of diapers and baby supplies (mentioned 9 times); lists or flyers for other community resources/supports (n = 9); the FRC monthly calendar (n = 7); bus passes and/or gas cards (n = 6); school supplies (n = 4); and personal hygiene/care products (n = 3). Most of these items were typically mentioned along with other listed supports received and/or while making general comments of the perceived value and utility of individual FRCs within the communities served. These supports were typically perceived as valuable and helped reduce familial stress and financial burden (especially when multiple concrete supports were accessed) impacting patron households:

...my son, he was like a month old, and I was running low on pampers and Ms. [CPLRC staff member] ... we get together the diapers and all type of stuff [including a baby basket of supplies] ...I'm like, okay, that became very useful ...because I was ...not working at the time ... So that really helped me out a lot...

“My daughter when she was in pull ups, I came and got pull ups from her [CPLRC staff member] ... it's like so much [a] stress reliever when it comes down to money and food with my kids...”

The SWAG is a great ... community resource place to come. I remember several times I've come here to use the computer, job searches. I have also received bus cards for monthly bus card because my car was repossessed. I fell deep down in the mud. I was in and out of jobs, I'm a CNA. Yeah, COVID hit I had even gotten COVID several times, not just once. I have 11 grandchildren ...it has been a struggle ... being a single person coming here for help, only for job searches and food ... then all I ever really needed was a computer and they helped me with that, and they helped me navigate a lot of things with my unemployment when I was trying to get it ... they helped me with transportation [from bus passes].

Responsiveness

Frequently, patrons listed the concrete supports received (sometimes in combination with other protective factor supports) along with a general statement suggesting the provision of these supports was responsive to their individual, family, or community needs. There were 14 such comments, for example:

She's [CPLRC staff member] good with ... helping people ... they got clothing and all that ...it's actually a great asset to this community and people use it so a lot of people ain't got no reason to say they're not hungry ... or they need this or they need that if [they] use your resources.

I've seen people come in, when I've been waiting for the clothes closet, and they ... don't know about fax, they don't know about anything, and the staff member will ask them, "well, what is it that you need to do? Okay, well you're going to need a cover sheet, and where's the phone number where you're going to send it?" They walk them through it and don't make them feel stupid.

"I'm like guys [others in the community] if you need ... just go there if you need to. Print something if you need to, fax something, if you need a notary, like, they're willing to help."

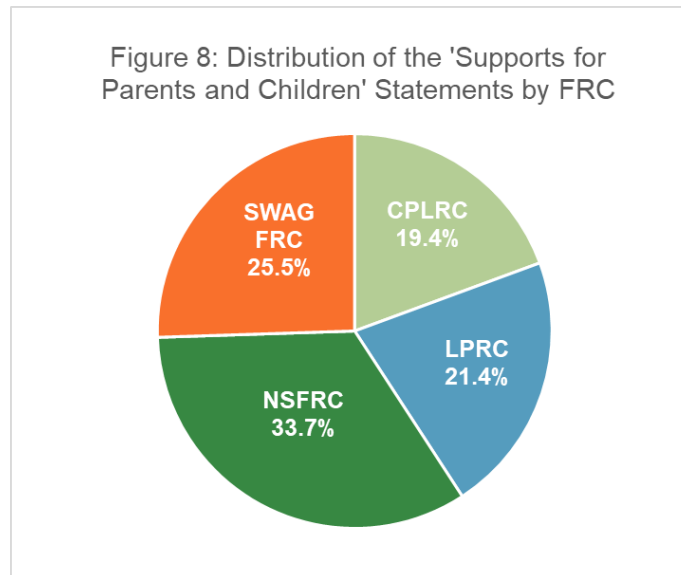
I've come here for your clothing. I've come here for food. I don't have a computer myself, so I came here to apply for HUD housing. I came here to apply for EBT. Like, I've been using all the resources that they'll give me, and it's been incredibly helpful.

...they have a great food pantry and clothing. They give away the clothing. They have ... that Bread on Tuesdays ... [When] word got around "do you know DCF is down at the Resource Center?" [NSFRC] ... [it] was very busy helping some people on the computers doing ACCESS applications ...signed some people up for hope Florida and helped them get some services that they need.

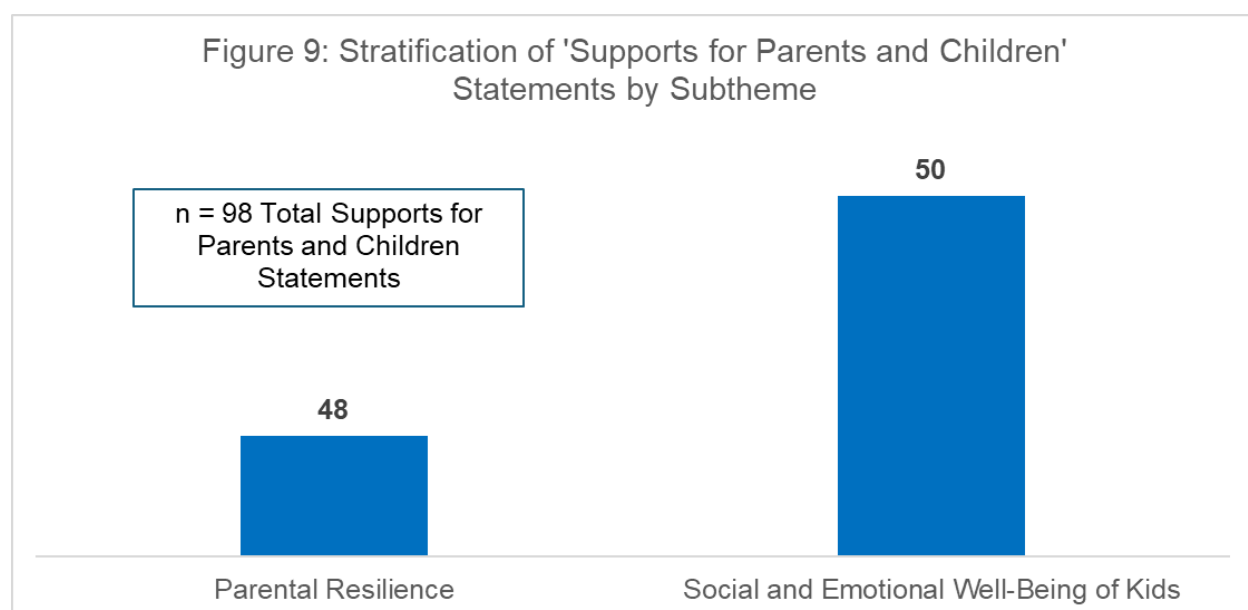
It really helps coming and using the computers. I've had to come here and print stuff off that really helps. Everybody here has been so helpful. We came to a couple of the clothes drives, which was a lot of help.

Theme Four: Supports for Parents and Children

The theme of *Supports for Parents and Children* focus on content and embodies subthemes related to services and supports that promote parental resilience (n = 48) and the social and emotional well-being of children (n = 50); each are protective factors by which select services and supports provided at the FRCs are organized by.



There was a total of 98 content statements (n = 33 for the NSFRC and 25, 21, and 19 for the SWAG FRC, the LPRC, and the CPLRC respectively) identified with this theme. Comments were affiliated with five individual patron participants at CPLRC, nine patron participants at NSFRC, five patron participants at LPRC, and five at SWAG FRC.



Parental Resilience

With respect to comments/content related to support for parents and children that promote parental resilience, content analyses utilized the existing classification of supports by protective factor used by the FRCs. Existing categories of parental resilience supports include (for example) the provision of: Health/Medical Information, Job/Employment Assistance, Budgeting and Financial Literacy, Mental Health/Stress Management, Community Safety Events, and Adult Education Supports (Perry et al., 2024a; 2024b). Of the 48 total comments focused on the parental resilience subtheme, 16 were affiliated with patron feedback groups associated with the SWAG FRC, followed by 13, 10, and 9 at the NSFRC, the LPRC, and the CPLRC, respectively.

Supports associated with job/employment assistance and enhancing budgeting and financial literacy skills were frequently mentioned. There were 16 comments across all the FRCs that highlighted the use of select supports and services that aided with job searches and applications (individually, job board access, online job applications, and through employment fairs), resume development, the development and refinement of interview skills, and money/financial/budget management (individual and group events). Four specific comments (3

from SWAG FRC patrons and 1 from a NSFRC patron) were made denoting the mental health supports provided or facilitated by staff at FRCs. One patron noted:

“But the only thing I really appreciate SWAG for is encouraging me to not give up. I almost fell into depression. They give you ways to get mental help, you know, through Meridian; I had got resources there.”

Although there are specific classifications of services at the FRCs (denoted above) targeting the promotion of parental resilience, patrons noted on numerous occasions (n = 21) how the provision of supports related to other protective factors (e.g., concrete supports in the time of need, social connection events, enhancing knowledge of parenting and child development, along with the social and emotional competence of children) are a source of stress relief and aid with promoting parental resilience. Select patrons spoke of the “burden” of being a single parent, the “crisis” and “stress” associated with food, clothing, school supplies, and housing needs, all of which were mitigated given supports provided through the FRCs. Supports assisting children provide some respite for select parents, aiding them to cope with the demands of parenting, as one patron notes:

“I couldn't have navigated the pandemic ... without support from SWAG. I wouldn't have made it. Because I didn't have no break from my kid...”

Some social connection events and services and supports structured to enhance knowledge of parenting and child development were perceived as a source stress relief and resilience building. There were six comments by SWAG FRC patrons that identified their participation in community/parent cafes, parent power group/meetings, and community events/dinners that were perceived as opportunities to strengthen supports and resilience for parents. As one patron noted:

...it's a community dinner, for the community to get involved ... not just to eat dinner, to interact with other people that's in the community and strengthen the community, along with you know ... Even being in the rough neighborhood, I found ... mothers coming together ... with our children and strengthening our

families, that's, that's what it's about, you know, they see us communicating and getting along, they got a better chance of getting along with each other. If it's a situation we should be able to, as women, mothers, fathers, we should be able to come together and say, you know, I had a situation with you or your child or whatever, without having to fight each other.

Although the supports and quality of service delivery at the NSFRC was uniformly praised in response to questions posed, and select patrons highlighted how community events, “...really support my family,” there were a few comments from NSFRC patrons that identified the need for a greater opportunity for caregivers to develop “...a support system” and for families to “...get connected with each other.” For example, even though the NSFRC does not currently provide parenting groups, one patron noted:

Like for me, being a single mom. If you have a group, not necessarily a single mom group, but just like a parenting group, and you could get together and communicate, and you could maybe help each other out ... some kind of resource like that to connect people [parents] within the community ... A set of parents ... could connect ...like if you're involved in the same kind of stuff ... learn from each other also and you learn of different resources.

Social and Emotional Well-being of Children

The second subtheme associated with support for parents and children focused on services and supports that addressed the social and emotional well-being of children. A total of 50 comments were identified with this subtheme, with 20 statements affiliated with patron participants from the NSFRC, and 11, 10, and 9 affiliated with the LPRC, the CPLRC, and the SWAG FRC patrons, respectively. The most common supports for children and youth focused on a variety of after-school enrichment programs and supports, including homework help and mentoring activities. Fourteen of the twenty (70%) comments that mentioned afterschool programming were affiliated with NSFRC patrons, with the remaining six divided amongst the remaining FRC groups (three from the SWAG FRC patron participants). The comments from NSFRC patrons spoke favorably and admirably about the impact of their child(ren)’s participation in afterschool programming both academically and socially. Particular attention was directed to the engagement and child development skills of staff (particularly the NSFRC

Program Manager, Dr. Philip Mobley), the opportunity for children to get one-to-one attention (when needed, sometimes with the assistance of college student volunteers), and the meaningful caring connections that the children develop with staff and their peers, as the following comments emulate:

I have two kids... 9 and 7 that [get] after school assistance with, like homework, with reading and just going over just the material from throughout the day. I've found that to be really, really helpful with the kids ... it's not just somebody going over material with them, but it's also they [staff] make a really good connection with the kids that are here, and they start bonding and everything.

...it's important that they have that one-on-one connection, ... in a group, they're reluctant to speak out. If they come here and they can sit and talk with [staff members named, including NorthStar FRC Manager and secretary] ...they feel more comfortable and you know, sharing what their need is. I know my grandson ... was coming here for the tutoring ... on some occasions he would tell [NorthStar FRC Manager] ...I don't have any homework to work on. He was reluctant to bring it to the forefront because you know, there were other students in there and he was a little embarrassed because he is a grade or two behind and he didn't want ... the others to know that he needed help now, and that this summer he's going to be going to a five or six week program that Lake City Middle School ... are helping their students to make up that grade. So, [NorthStar FRC Manager] ... agreed to do one-on-one tutoring with him, with help [from] some students from the college. So, we're going to be pushing him ... because he needs to catch up and if he can ... he'll go ... Columbia high school next year.

They [children] don't feel pressured here like they do [at]... the middle school tutoring after school program ... that one is closer to me; however, when he [child] comes here [he] ... get more one-on-one [attention]...I think it's the way they [staff] interact with the kids, it's sort of different than at the school ...

...I think what also helps ... [is] ... the students from the college. Well, the kids don't look at them like grown-ups...they're closer to their age and they feel a special rapport [than] ... if they're working with an adult.

“Like, my son was coming and getting tutored by [NSFRC manager] ... he helped him tremendously.”

The people here have been incredible, like they just are so patient. Like [NSFRC manager] could sit with [son of patron] for hours and where I would get frustrated, he could just sit with him ... he was so good with him...

...you know the school system is so limited in what they can provide for students. ...just know[ing] there is a place or somewhere to go to help your child in the afternoon because some parents can't afford to pay tutors and to have that available, it's just really great!

Parents of children attending the NSFRC and the SWAG FRC afterschool programs were pleased that their children seemed to like attending the program, were learning, and were provided opportunities to socialize in a safe environment, for example:

“The thing is ... what I had noticed [was] how the children just love it. When you see them enjoying [themselves] ... that's important.”

“I was helped with summer camp [and] after school tutoring ... it was a safe place for him to socialize with his peers, and that was, for me, the biggest... It was a place with adult supervision.”

Similar sentiments were mentioned by patrons at other FRCs whose children participate in after school programs/activities. A CPLRC patron highlighted the “*extra one-on-one help*” and tutoring opportunities to “*...help better them [children] with whatever they lacking on*” from school. Another parent at the SWAG FRC praised the attentiveness of staff and communications with parents:

Like with my son, when he got out of school ... he gets off the bus and comes straight to tutoring and then you know the staff will call and say, “hey, is he walking home or are you coming to get him?” So, ...they will call you ...especially if you didn't put [communicate] that he was supposed to walk home, they'll call and make sure ... SWAG is awesome.

An LPRC patron described the tutoring services provided for children to be “*...very essential to the community.*” A few comments from LPRC patrons also emphasized the importance of staff members' ability and skills when interacting with children:

Yes, they're very interactive with people. They're very interactive with the kids. Even when the kids are in a bad mood, which happens to all kids, you know they didn't get enough sleep, they're hungry, or whatever ...there's always toys out there for them to play with and little books and ... for the children ...resources that we wouldn't otherwise come across.

“The staff are, like, very courteous and they joke with you. They even joke with my grandson when he's screaming his head off [speaker laughs].”

There were four occasions when patrons noted their children attended summer enrichment or camp activities through the NSFRC and the LPRC. In addition, there were eight

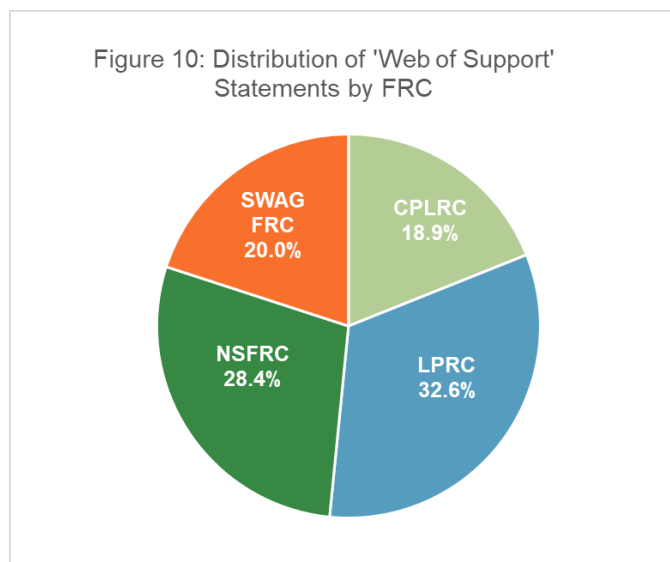
occasions when community or social events with a focus on child or parent and child activities were seen as having social and emotional benefits for children. At the CPLRC, patrons spoke fondly of select community events, fun days, and parent-child story times (at the library) where children were introduced to African music and percussion instruments, watched movies with family members, made ice cream, and read books together, as one patron noted:

I used to bring my kids up here [for] ... story times ... My kids very well enjoyed ... story time ... they used to make like homemade ice cream; just activities for the kids was very nice to do, as well as a family

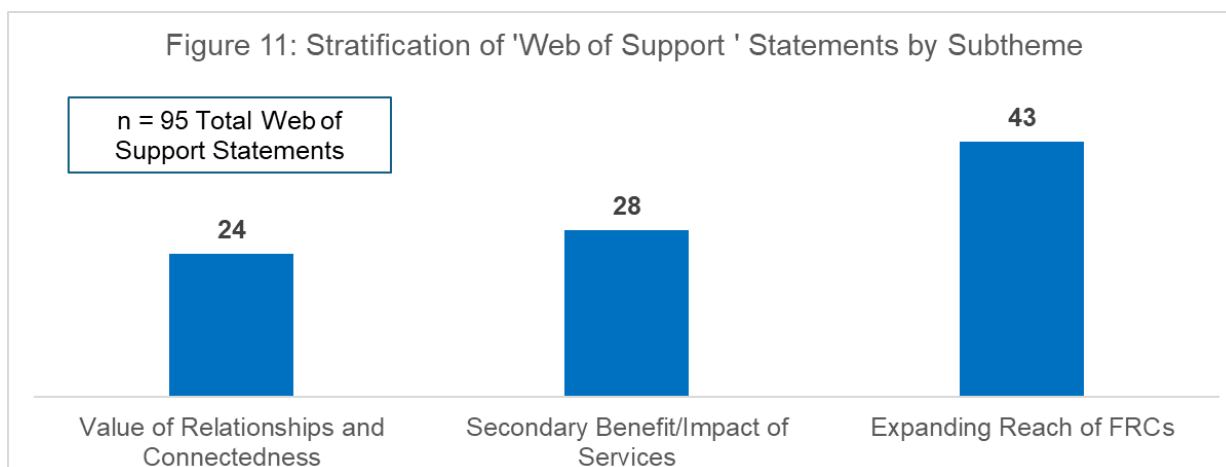
Community events at the NSFRC, including a spring maypole event and back-to-school event, were highlighted as events that children and family members enjoyed and “*awesome community event[s]*.” Remaining comments affiliated with this subtheme mentioned assistance received through referrals to Meridian Behavioral Health Care (a CPLRC parent) and peer consultation among parents (at the SWAG FRC) for children with social and behavioral health concerns, Girl Scout group participation (at the SWAG FRC and the LPRC), and assistance with holiday/Christmas gifts (e.g. Toys for Tots, other family holiday events at all of the FRCs).

Theme Five: Web of Support

The final theme represented by a series of statements that collectively was conceptualized as the value and benefits of FRC activities in contributing to a *Web of Support* for patrons. For the 95 content statements associated with this theme, 31 were attributed to patrons from the LPRC, 27 from the NSFRC, and 19 and 18 with the SWAG FRC and the CPLRC, respectively. Comments were affiliated with four individual patron participants at CPLRC, seven patron participants at NSFRC, four patron participants at LPRC, and four at SWAG FRC.



What was identified as a *Web of Support* theme represented content and subthemes that spoke to the opportunities for, and the value of relationships and connectedness, including social relationships, and the development of quality relationships with staff and between patrons (n = 24). These relationships and connections may be a secondary impact or benefit of other services and support received (n = 28). Additional comments included within this theme focused on the value and benefit of expanding the reach of the FRCs, promoting social connections and dual/reciprocal supportive relationships among patrons. (n = 43)



Value of Relationships and Connectedness

As denoted above, there were 24 statements describing supports and services received that highlighted the existence and value of relationships and connectedness, social relationships,

and the development of quality relationships with staff and between patrons across the FRCs (8 by SWAG FRC patrons, and 7, 6, and 3 by LPRC, NSFRC, and CPLRC patrons, respectively). The value of relationships and connectedness, as well as social relationships with other parents and families was mentioned in a variety of contexts related to different supports and services received. Among SWAG FRC patrons, there was reinforcement of how “*important*” it was to bring “*people from the neighborhood together,*” to “*interact with other people*” to “*strengthen the community*” especially within the area served given the historical “*division*” between neighborhoods (Holly Heights, Linton Oaks, Majestic Oaks, and Tyler Oaks) due to “*drugs and gangs*” and the isolation of these neighborhoods from more resourced areas of Gainesville. Similar sentiments were expressed by patrons at other FRCs. At the LPRC, one patron, who praised the benefits received at the FRC, spoke of her efforts to share with others, especially neighbors in need:

You know, I'm not about to hold on to nothing if I'm not going to use it. I've got plenty of beans, I give them out all the time, cook stuff in the crockpot, take it around to the different neighbors that I know don't cook or sick or whatever.

Two LPRC patrons shared how they came to know one another, and their friendship developed because of connections made at the FRC while seeking services and support. These experiences have served as an impetus for their efforts to encourage others in the community to “*...come around girl*” and visit the LPRC; as one of the two friends noted:

I told a lot of people come here ... to get clothes and stuff ... I said go tell your friends, bring your kids and stuff like that ... because I know people in my neighborhood and I tell them about this and other people I see ...in the store, I tell them...

For one SWAG FRC patron, sharing their positive experiences at the FRC was a way of connecting with others and spreading the word within the community of the SWAG FRC’s benefits:

... that's the only way that we're going to put the unity back in community if you can share something that's beneficial, then it can spread more ... I have to say,

SWAG on a daily basis, they [other patrons and community members] be like 'girl, you know, I see you do this and how'd you learn about this?' SWAG, duh ... SWAG, duh ...SWAG.

This same impact was manifested with patrons at the CPLRC. Two patrons at the CPLRC highlighted how the benefits received encouraged them to reach out to others, share their experiences and encourage other parents and residents to access the FRC:

A lot of people that I know, I gave them flyers and told them to come with me because of this program. I helped a lot of people sign up for your program ... when my friend needs some diapers for her baby because she had just came from out of town. I told her come to [Program Manager at CPLRC]. She came.

Patrons at the NSFRC also spoke of the dynamics representing the value of adults and children within the community interacting with one another through the FRC events and activities, and the additional benefit of establishing “*personal connections*” and “*getting to know each other [patrons]*” when seeking services for oneself and one’s family. A grandparent caregiver spoke of the “*interconnecting kind of thing*” that happens at the NSFRC events, most notably (for example) a health fair where patrons and caregivers can learn about other resources and activities/social events in the community:

...when we had those health fairs ...they invited the other agencies to come in and do their programs... I go to senior services, and we were doing line dancing ... were able to recruit some other members [patrons] to come to our line dancing class ...

Another patron asserted how through the receipt of services and supports at the NSFRC, there existed the opportunity for families to connect and potentially develop relationships and supports systems:

I know for a fact there are more families out there ... in Columbia County that definitely could use the services ... that may not know about it [NSFRC] and ... the opportunity for the families to connect ... Sometimes whenever families come here ... to get help with whatever it is they're trying to get help with ...families are so hustled ...you go to work, you take your kids out ... you get them home, you bathe them, you know. Sometimes I feel like the population of families that we're working with may not realize that they could use it [NSFRC] as ... a community to connect; for the children to connect, or for the mothers to connect; their fathers ... the parents. Caregivers [need] to be able to use [NSFRC] ... as a support

system like, 'hey, we're in the same boat here; let's team up. You know, maybe I could pick the kids up' ... for moral support to talk to each other. So, I think that the opportunity is there ... I'm sure that there are families that have been to some events that have, like, become friends and help each other ...

NSFRC patrons, like those at other FRCs, share information about FRC services and supports given the positive experiences they report. One caregiver, highlighting the difficulty with getting her grandchild enrolled in an afterschool program at her grandchild's school, praised the availability and quality of assistance received from the homework help program at the NSFRC (that she learned of via word-of-mouth from a retired schoolteacher), adding *"I went back to my church to tell them about it ... I do think we need to send a flyer or something to them [her church] so they can have it on their bulletin board ..."*

Secondary Impact or Benefit of Other Services and Supports

Some of the relationships and connections highlighted above may, in part, be a secondary impact or benefit of other services and support received. This subtheme is represented by comments that highlight how the receipt of one service and support offered by an FRC led to the identification and utilization of other needed services and supports provided directly by the FRC and/or a collaborative partner. This identification of other services and supports could be a direct result of interactions with FRC staff (or review of disseminated information by the FRC) or through interactions with (or on behalf of) other patrons at the FRC. There were five comments affiliated with CPLRC patrons representing this subtheme. Four of the comments denoted how the receipt of a specific service led to the identification of other services received by themselves or others. For example, one patron that sought food assistance learned of supports for computer access and assistance with completing forms and *"applications."* This information was disseminated to *"...senior citizens in my neighborhood"* whom the patron subsequently aids in getting them food, as well as, assisting them with web-based searches and applications for which the senior citizens are very *"grateful"* and *"happy"* for the help of the patron. Three additional comments by CPLRC patrons reinforce this dynamic. One patron that sought help because they

were not “*computer literate*” learned about other supports and connected extended family members to the food program/supports provided. Another patron that accessed the FRC calendar at the library, led to their use of other information (about partner agencies) disseminated at the CPLRC and received help in gaining utility assistance. These experiences led the patron to share information about and connect friends to the CPLRC for services and supports that are “...*very, very resourceful.*”

There were ten similar comments made by patrons at the LPRC, where the receipt of one service or support (typically a concrete support) led to the identification and use of another support and subsequent dissemination of information of these supports to others (i.e., “*friends*”, “*people in the neighborhood*” and extended family members). In addition, there were five comments that emphasized how through contact with the FRC, the patron connected with other patrons that provided a reference or information of other supports and services within the community that could be utilized. In some cases, these connected patrons became direct supports for one another. One patron, who has developed friendships at community events offered a scenario:

“[Patron states to other patron] “*hey my cousin has epilepsy let me tell you what happened here, and this is what we did*” [other patron responds] “*oh I didn’t think of that*” you know? *That’s the support thing, I think that’s a big deal.*” Others spoke positively of the peer/caregiver supports that develop naturally as a secondary benefit of FRC involvement, where patrons can say to one another (as one patron paraphrased) “*Oh I’ve dealt with this, let me help you with this,*” or “*what’s going on with you, maybe I can make a suggestion.*” Another patron highlighted the value of having the opportunity to connect and talk to other patrons that have had similar life experiences, including difficulties dealing with other agencies or organizations:

You know what I’m saying? “Can we meet, let’s go to the park” and have somebody to sound it off to, you know, and [identifying information excluded] can say, “Girl when they did that to me, this is what we did. Come on let’s go get some coffee.” You know, or whatever.

Like LPRC participants, there were 10 comments from NSFRC patrons that represented this subtheme. Several identified how the receipt of select services led to the identification and receipt of other (secondary) services (e.g., child’s participation in after-school homework help led to family receipt of clothes or food, job assistance or food assistance led to child participation in summer enrichment programs, fax or notary assistance led to other concrete supports, etc.) and how “*word spreads*” within the community about the services and contributes to a “*comradery*” of “*people to come to get information*” where the connections made through FRC activities are “*really good for networking.*” Among the three identified comments from SWAG FRC patrons, one reinforced the secondary benefit of participating in the Parent Power workshop as it (like LPRC patron experiences) provided the opportunity of patrons becoming direct supports for one another, for example, in how to communicate with a caseworker at a different organization or dialog with teachers and network with other parents when their child is having behavioral issues at school. Two comments highlighted how the receipt of select services and supports led to the patron volunteering and doing community service at the FRC, helping others, in addition to fulfilling a community service requirement for public assistance benefits.

Expanding the Reach of the FRCs in the Community

Additional comments (n = 43) included within this theme focused on the value and benefit of expanding the reach of the FRCs within the community, including (but not limited to) promoting social connections and dual/reciprocal supportive relationships among patrons. Within this context, patrons spoke about the influence and value of patrons as a conduit of information and agent of outreach for the FRCs given their positive experiences receiving support and help. Numerous comments, across all FRC feedback groups spoke of the value of word-of-mouth and connections patrons make with others in the community as effective outreach tools to individuals and families that need the resources and services provided at the FRCs. Among CPLRC patrons, four comments highlighted the anxiety and fear some in the community have related to asking

for assistance and their efforts to encourage their friends, family, members, and neighbors to go to the FRC because (as one patron noted) “...because I used to [be] one of those people ... like that that really need help but they scared to ask for it because they pride issue.” A patron at the NSFRC notes that they highlight to others that at the FRC “...you don’t feel pressured, you don’t feel looked down upon” when encouraging others to seek assistance. More generally, patrons share their positive experiences and encourage others with needs to seek assistance from an FRC. As one patron noted, “I tell people too, all the time [about services at LPRC]” with others affirming, “we tell whoever “Hey, did you know” you know?” and “I’ll tell you, if I see you outside, they’re having such and such [events/resources] ... I’ll let you know what’s going on [at the FRC]” A patron at the NSFRC provided an example of an interaction that mirrored experiences and comments by others:

I ran into one couple who said ... we don't have the money, but we need some hand sanitizer and this stuff ... I ... heard them talking in the store, they were in the line behind me. I said you need to go over to NorthStar [speaker and group laughing]

One patron of SWAG FRC comments:

I don't hesitate to tell people 'go by SWAG' ... So, a lot of people like 'girl, what you know, do you know how to ...' I'm like, 'oh, ... why don't you go ask them at SWAG?' ... If you call 2-1-1, go by SWAG ... they work kind of hand-in-hand ...

The power and influence of word-of-mouth, community member endorsements, and dissemination of information as outreach efforts was reinforced repeatedly, with some suggesting there was an obligation of patrons that benefitted from services to share information with others in the neighborhoods served, as one patron noted:

We have parent groups. We have not just parent groups, we have caregiver ...they've just started this year, the community cafe ... staff cannot be the only ones to say, “hey, look, did you know we had a community cafe?”

In any regard, there was consistent feedback and sentiment that the initiative, outreach, and engagement actions of patrons that received services and supports promotes social

connections among community members and reinforces dual/reciprocal supportive relationships among patrons.

Patron outreach to other patrons happens in a variety of other ways. Several comments (across all the FRC feedback groups) revealed how patrons take and share the FRC calendars with other parents, community members, and post them in churches they attend. As one patron noted, *“you can get an extra copy ... and pass it on to somebody else in the neighborhood.”* Patrons from the SWAG FRC and the LPRC noted how they forward, share, or *“cut and paste”* information they receive from e-mails or on-line postings of FRC events and services with others.

Although the efforts of patrons outreaching to other patrons seemed to have an established importance, patrons made helpful suggestions for additional, or the expansion of existing, efforts of outreach to families and households within the community. Several comments spoke of the value of initiating or enhancing more collaborative efforts with churches or faith-based organizations and places of worship, for example an NSFRC patron notes, *“put the flyers out there, do more talking [with] the community churches.”* Another comment from a NSFRC patron reinforced:

We could increase awareness of the programs and services by doing a little bit more announcements in the churches ... I try to go to church every Sunday, but I haven't heard a whole lot of announcements about NorthStar and what they do ...

There was consensus that services and supports should continue at all the FRCs. In terms of expanding reach, there were a few additional suggestions (beyond current efforts) that reinforced continued advertising of FRC efforts at other community agencies, on web sites, and enhancing social media presence. A SWAG FRC and NSFRC patron encouraged more targeted advertisement of volunteer opportunities for patrons to assist with FRC activities and complete community service obligations. Note was made by a patron at the NSFRC to enhance outreach to

families in need throughout Columbia County and enhance the level of connections with and between these families:

I can speak on the outreach services ... a good idea would be to reach out because I know for a fact there are more families out there ... others in Columbia County that definitely could use the services ... that may not know about it [NSFRC] ... the opportunity for the families to connect, I do feel that the opportunity is there ... But as it [NSFRC] grows, maybe that could be a goal, is for some of the families to try to get connected with each other ... I think that's some of the barriers that that we're trying to break, is for ...the families, to connect with the community...

Summary

Findings denoted in this report suggest that patrons across all FRC feedback groups have received and benefited from a plethora of services and supports with an amplified value placed on a host of services and supports classified as concrete supports, in addition to, services and supports that promote parental resilience and the social and emotional well-being of children. The utility of these services and supports is enhanced by factors encapsulated as select themes identified via content analyses. First, the FRCs were perceived to be of inherent and instrumental value to the households/neighborhoods and the broader communities they serve. This perceived community value is defined by the identified positive impact within the community, the accessibility of services to those in need, the efficiency of operations, and the existence, quality, and nature of collaborations with other community partners to serve patrons and their families. Further, patrons valued the friendly and supportive atmosphere across the FRCs defined by the general and genuine helpfulness of staff that are attentive, responsive, and patient; the provision of supports in a non-judgmental, supportive, and/or reliable manner, in an environment that is friendly and safe; and the quality of interpersonal support (including with and between patrons) afforded them. Finally, the FRCs provided, either directly or indirectly, opportunities for patrons and their families to access and expand a web of support. Here, the FRCs presented patrons with opportunities for the development of quality relationships and connectedness with others including staff, patrons, and other parents/caregivers. Patrons share their positive experiences

with others in the community and serve as key agents of information dissemination about the FRCs, as well as patron engagement, encouraging others with needs to utilize the supports and services available. Although some helpful suggestions were made for enhancing family engagement in the communities served, there was uniform agreement of the value of services and supports offered and the need to sustain and expand the efforts and influence of the FRCs in the future.

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