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October 8, 2002

Testimony re:
Expanded Food And Nutrition Education Program And Family Economics, Family Development, Housing and Environment Programs.

My name is Nancy Daniels, Director of Community Initiatives with United Way of Greater Topeka. I am happy to give testimony regarding the helpfulness of the Research and Extension programs.

United Way of Greater Topeka has been invested in Community Initiatives since 1993 when we replicated the Success By 6 initiative. Success By 6 is a wide-ranging collaboration whose mission is to ***create a community where every child has the keys to a successful life by the age of six.*** K-State Research and Extension, Shawnee County was a founding partner and remains one of our most valuable, committed partners.

Success By 6 has action teams committed to the following goal areas: Preventive Health*, Home Visitation*, Early Care and Education*, Safety, Nutrition* and Diversity. The teams that have asterisks by them are teams that have had very active participation by K-State Research and Extension, Shawnee County agents. Agents have **chaired** two of these teams. Although Success By 6 strongly believes that "Adequate Family Income" is probably *the* primary barrier to healthy childhood development, we have not had an action team in this area. Instead, we have written about the importance of "Adequate Family Income" in our Critical Issues papers that we present to legislators.

Program Strengths
My experience with K-State Research and Extension, Shawnee County tells me that the following are program strengths:

1. **Leadership Skills**
   All of these women have shown the willingness and ability to take leadership to make things happen. No shrinking violets here!
2. **Commitment to partnership and collaboration**
   While there is no shortage of leadership, they show a commitment to the long, sometimes arduous process of collaboration. I've watch relationships that started out stretched and tense because of personal differences become warm and committed because both partners were professionally committed to finding ways to work together. These partners don't have to be told the value of what happened there!
3. **Focus on Outcomes and Evaluation.**
   Few of our partners are as excellent at conveying, "what difference did it make" as our K-State Research and Extension, Shawnee County agents. It is helpful that Extension has adopted the United Way logic model since it gives us a common way of communicating.

4. **Research that documents best practices and gaps in service.**
5. **Commitment to their communities—Vision for "what can be"**
   See #2. Perhaps that comes from that research see #4.

Gaps in Service:

EFNEP does not exist in every County
Despite the fact that Success By 6 does not have an "Adequate Family Income" Action Team, we are extremely grateful for the work of EFNEP and other programs who are helping these low-income families. I cannot imagine what other counties in Kansas are doing where there are no community collaborations working at all. In these counties, EFNEP would help fill the gap in serving families who don't have enough money to make it from paycheck to paycheck.

The difficulty of partnering Grant Funding with EFNEP funding
In 1998 when Success By 6 and EFNEP partnered to make an EFNEP Spanish-speaking visitor into a full-time position through grant funding, it was a major help to both the EFNEP program and to the community. The Spanish-speaking community is our largest growing population. At that time, getting the paperwork achieved to make this happen seemed extraordinarily difficult. This is not unusual in our partnerships. It seems that the larger the system, the harder it is to navigate new waters. The EFNEP program director was the one that took those systems issues on and eventually conquered them. I know that this is where our future lies—solving problems through grant-garnered funding—and anything that could be done to help lubricate this process would be helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to give testimony about this very essential community partner.

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