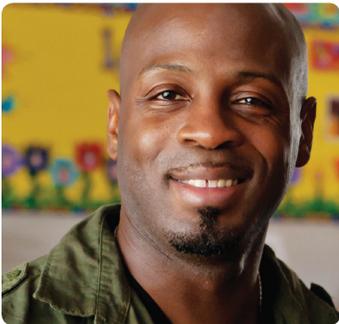


# United Way of the Bay Area—Community Schools Initiative



## Supporting families so kids can thrive

Community Schools provide services and support to struggling families so children can focus on school instead of troubles at home.

Many students from low-income families go to school hungry, sick, or poorly prepared, resulting in poor academic progress. Community Schools transform public schools into neighborhood hubs that bring health care, food pantries, after-school programs, parent education classes, and other services directly to school campuses.

Families struggling to put food on the table and keep a roof over their heads get the support they need, and in turn, their children can focus on learning. This has a positive impact on academic achievement, attendance rates, and parental participation. A good education lays the foundation for success later in life. And with Community Schools, more kids get a fair shot.

### Community Schools model delivers results:

- Communities in Schools, a national model that provides case management to students graduated 88% of seniors compared to the national average of 70%.\*
- 81% of students went onto some form of post-secondary education compared with 68.1% nationally.\*\*
- In San Mateo, CA, community schools increased proficient or advanced scoring in math from 39% to 59%.\*\*\*

**POOR CHILDREN ARE 2X**  
*as likely* **TO REPEAT A GRADE**  
*or* **TO BE EXPELLED** *or*  
**SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL†**

\*Source: Communities in Schools

\*\*Source: Communities in Schools

\*\*\*Source: First Report of Findings: Multi Site Evaluation of San Mateo County Community Schools

†Source: Gale Encyclopedia of Education

# Adding SparkPoint®—Addressing Root Problems

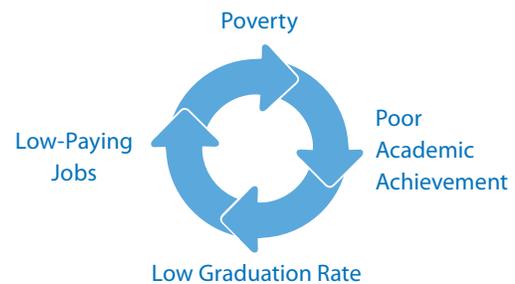


**67% of BAY AREA  
ECONOMICALLY-DISADVANTAGED  
3RD GRADERS  
CAN'T READ at GRADE LEVEL,  
compared to 47% OVERALL\***

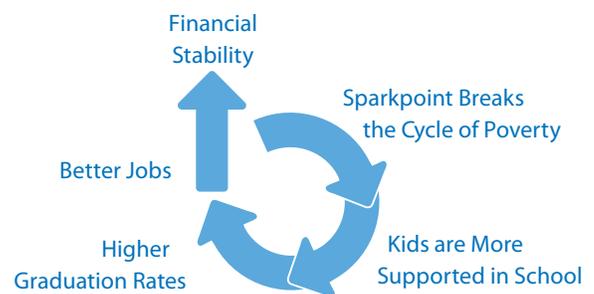
\*Source: 2012 STAR Test Results from <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest>  
accessed on October 11, 2012

## SparkPoint® Community Schools Strengthen Our Community

The long-term goal of SparkPoint Community Schools is to break the cycle of poverty by improving both a family's ability to earn a living, as well as their children's academic performance. When families are supported, kids go to school, stay in school, and learn more. And, when kids do better academically, they can get better jobs, are less likely to use taxpayer-funded services, and spend more money in our communities. Moving people out of poverty means a stronger local economy and a better community for everyone.



By breaking the cycle of poverty, kids are more supported in school, leading to better long-term financial outcomes.



## Bringing SparkPoint® to Community Schools

Community Schools do a great job of helping families with the many impacts of poverty. But we believe that fighting the symptoms is not enough. To get at the root cause of the problems and move families out of poverty, United Way is bringing our expertise in financial stability by integrating our SparkPoint centers with Community Schools.

SparkPoint is a one-stop financial help and education center where people can access a full range of services. Each SparkPoint client is paired with a financial coach who helps create a step-by-step plan to achieve financial goals, such as securing a good job, getting out of debt, going back to school, and saving money. SparkPoint commits to working with clients for up to three years to achieve financial stability.

“When kids are in trouble, we usually find some sort of trouble at home too: mom has lost a job, or the family is facing foreclosure. Having SparkPoint at a Community School allows the entire family to lift themselves out of poverty so the child can thrive at school.”

– Dr. Ramona Bishop, Superintendent  
Vallejo City Unified School District

# The Hunger Diet—A SparkPoint Community School Story



## SparkPoint Community School at Solano Middle School: Etta's Story

Etta Foster is a single mom, who was unemployed for nine months. After rent, she had only \$30 a month for food. She and her two daughters lived on rice, beans, bread, and milk. More often than not, they went hungry and each lost about 20lbs. Before long, her kids' school performance started sliding.

"My younger daughter started struggling with her grades and getting into fights at school, and my older daughter was so stressed out that she didn't graduate high school," said Etta.

"We were living on \$30 a month for food, and my daughters and I each lost 20lbs because we were going hungry."

—ETTA, SPARKPOINT COMMUNITY SCHOOL CLIENT

Over the course of many months, Etta sent her resume out countless times, only to come up dry. She felt desperate. Then a friend recommended United Way's SparkPoint at Solano Middle School that helps struggling families get back on their feet and build a plan for lasting financial stability.

At SparkPoint, Etta immediately got help applying for food stamps and utilities assistance. More importantly, she met

Sylvia, a SparkPoint job coach. After improving her resume, Etta got called for four interviews and soon landed a job.

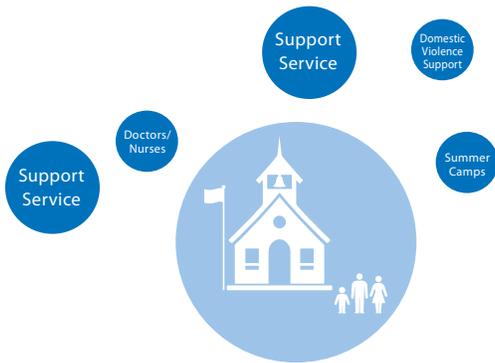
With SparkPoint's help, Etta's finances are improving, and her family is eating healthy again. Her younger daughter's grades are improving, and she stopped fighting, and her older daughter graduated high school.

"I feel so much relief that I can provide for my daughters and be what a mom should be so that they can go on and be who they are. SparkPoint not only helped me, they helped me to help myself. I am so grateful."

**71%** OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS are from **SOCIOECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES.\***

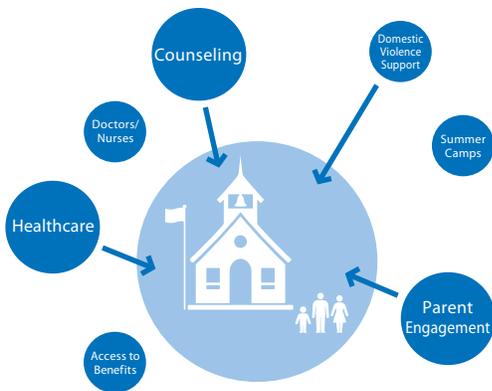
\*Source: CDE, 1st Annual Report on Dropouts 2011

# Raising the Bar—Providing Families with Maximum Support



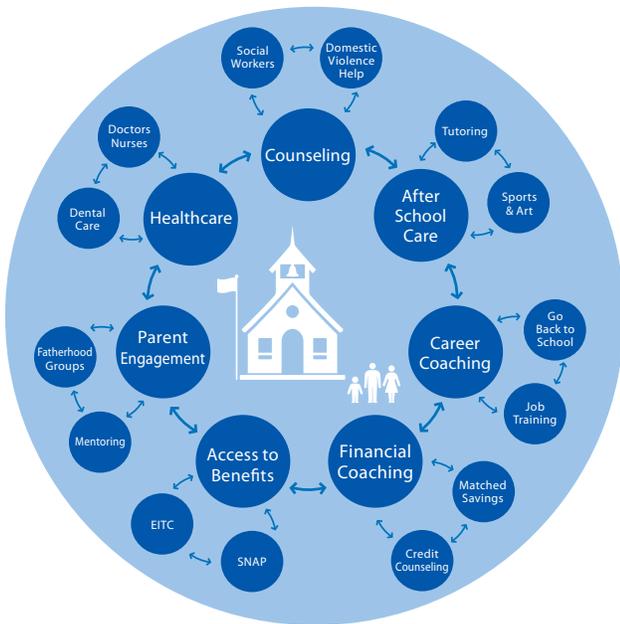
## Little Support

Traditional public school in a low-income community – few support services available; families must go to several places to access health and human services; families under financial stress find it difficult to access help/services and may not be able to give children the support they need to succeed in school



## Improved Support

Community Schools – a community hub with services such as health care, counseling, and parent-engagement programs available on the school campus; families have greater access to services, families are stronger, and children perform better in school; prospects for moving out of poverty remain limited



## Maximum Support

SparkPoint Community Schools – families not only gain access to health and human services of the traditional Community School, but are empowered to improve their financial situation. Parents or caregivers receive coaching to help them create a personal financial plan to set a budget, start saving, get out of debt, go back to school, get a good job, and achieve lasting financial stability

# Community Schools Initiative—A Growing Movement

## The Bay Area Community Schools Movement is Growing

More and more school districts are embracing the Community Schools model. For example United Way is working with both Vallejo and Oakland Unified School Districts to transform all schools to Community Schools by 2015.

## United Way's Role in Expanding Community Schools

United Way's goal is to cut Bay Area poverty in half by 2020. Introducing and integrating SparkPoint in Community Schools throughout the region is essential to achieving this goal.

Unfortunately, not all low-income neighborhoods are anchored by strong Community Schools. United Way will increase the number of Community Schools in our region by offering planning and improvement grants, as well as providing technical assistance to school districts interested in establishing Community Schools. United Way wants to create or improve 200 Community Schools by 2020 and integrate SparkPoint in at least 30 Community Schools over the next three years.

Working with more than 70 nonprofit and government partners, we have launched ten SparkPoint financial-counseling centers throughout the region over the last three years. Two are SparkPoint Community Schools located at Solano Middle School in Vallejo and Cleo Gordon Elementary School in Fairfield. Early data shows that families are taking advantage of the full range of services and moving forward on the path out of poverty.

By 2020, HELP LAUNCH  
**200** LOCAL  
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS



## United Way of the Bay Area's Community Schools Partnerships, 2012-2013

**Alameda:** Project Roadrunner at Marilyn Avenue Elementary School in Livermore; and Parent Resource Center at Urban Promise Academy in Oakland

**Napa:** McPherson Neighborhood Initiative, Family Resource Center at McPherson Elementary in Napa

**San Mateo:** Belle Haven Full Service Community School, Menlo Park; Redwood City 2020, Family Engagement and Leadership at Taft Elementary, Fair Oaks Elementary, Hoover Elementary, and John F. Kennedy Middle School, Redwood City

**San Francisco:** Beacon Centers/San Francisco Beacon Initiative at Francisco Middle School, James Denman Middle School & Leadership High School, Mission Neighborhood Center, Inc., George Washington High School, A.P. Giannini Middle School, Visitation Valley Middle School, John Muir Elementary School; and Family Engagement and High School Success Project at Phillip and Sala Burton Academic High School

**Solano:** Elsa Widenmann Elementary School, North Vallejo Full Service Community School Project; and SparkPoint Solano Centers at Cleo Gordon Elementary School and Solano Middle School

To get involved in the Community Schools movement, email [communityschools@uwba.org](mailto:communityschools@uwba.org)

To donate to United Way's Community School effort go to [www.uwba.org/donate/](http://www.uwba.org/donate/)

