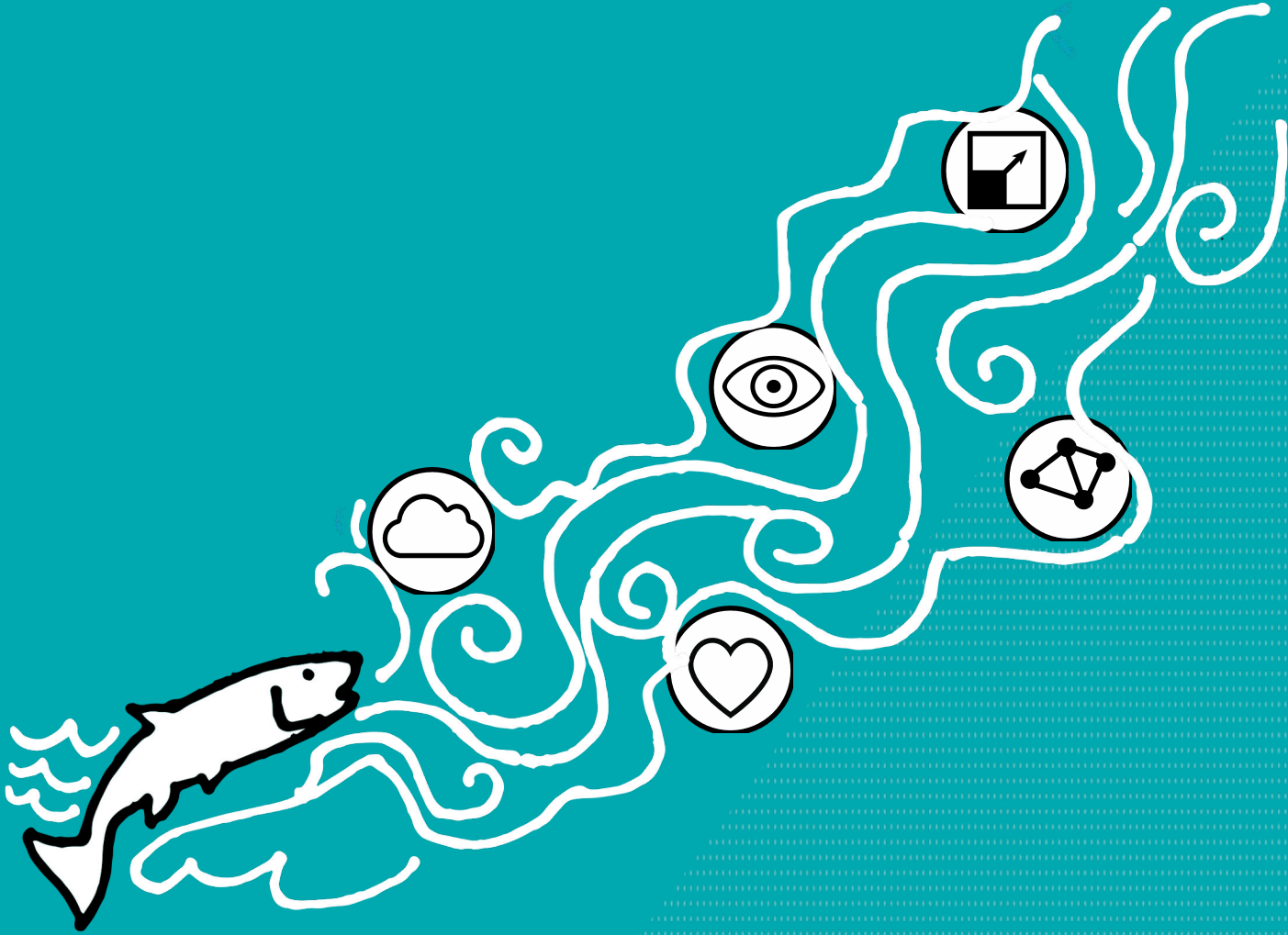


Community Centered Design

by Building Healthy Communities DEL NORTE



AUSTRALIA | NEW ZEALAND | SINGAPORE | KENYA | USA

Playbook Part A

Introducing Community Centered Design

Community-led change



When The California Endowment chose Del Norte and Tribal lands (DNATL) as one of their Building Healthy Communities sites, DNATL was like many rural places in northern California. Historic and economic traumas had changed the local story from one of abundance to one of scarcity. People felt powerless to make positive changes for their community. The solutions offered for local challenges were created by outsiders and were too small for the problems they were trying to fix, so the problems grew.

At first, Building Healthy Communities (BHC) planted seeds of hope and change in the ways foundations often do. They helped finish a new gym at Smith River Elementary School and a new community meeting space and laundry facility in Pecwan.

They funded AmeriCorps VISTA members who wrote grants to promote CalFresh at the farmers markets and build school gardens; worked for a return to scratch-cooked meals in schools; and supported parents creating a new parent-led preschool.

The solutions still weren't as big as the problems. It was time to try something different. We did. Ten years later, DNATL is a place where people have the power to make our lives better.

Community centered design

Community Centered Design

ThinkPlace, an international design organization, came to DNATL to teach local teams learn how to do empathy-based listening campaigns, to build empathy through learning about people's lived experience, and to brainstorm, prototype, and implement solutions with community involvement. We have called the process that grew out of DNATL's work with ThinkPlace "Community Centered Design". It combines human centered design, targeted universalism, collective impact, and systems thinking in service of systems transformation.

Community Organizing

True North Organizing was founded to build community power and support new leaders in the community. True North works to build power in the people most impacted by current inequalities and to support the development of new community leaders. True North's local organizing committees identify policy and systems changes that would improve their lives and take action to make those changes. Community organizing believes that people should be actively involved in the decisions that shape their lives.

Once it became clear that the long-term, transformational change BHC hoped for was not coming from business-as-usual approaches, BHC began to invest in new ways of making change. They focused more on how change was made—with the people most affected—instead of what change was made. The two biggest investments they made were in community organizing and Community Centered Design.

Targeted Universalism

Within the community, some groups are more disadvantaged by systems due to race, economic status, and life circumstances. If we are to design for equity, our approach to systems transformation needs to be empathetic to see these critical differences, to redistribute power, and to target change relative to people's different contexts and disadvantages.

Human Centered Design

Puts people at the heart of change and makes sense of systems by listening to understand the human experience of those systems.

Design creates a bias towards action by visualizing thinking, making things tangible, gathering feedback, and iterating.

Collective Impact

Connects and aligns efforts of community leaders, businesses, and employers across different sectors and different community groups. Alignment is inspired by empathy with the experiences different groups have of the same system revealing barriers, inequities, and unrealized opportunities. Through connection, alignment, and empathy we build a coalition for change.

Hope Theory

Builds capacity for individuals and groups to participate in the change. It is defined as the perceived capability to drive pathways to desired goals and to motivate oneself and others to use those pathways.

Systems transformation

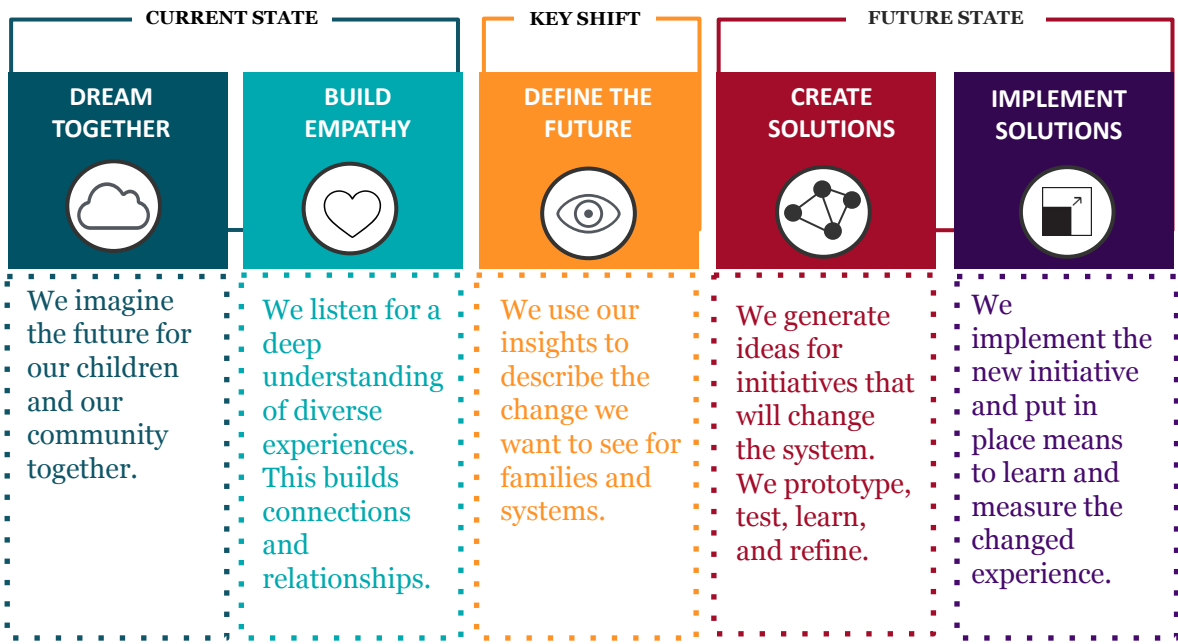
For thriving families
and communities.

Systems Thinking

Our thinking is holistic and long-term. We zoom between the big picture and the individual interaction. We look beyond solving the problems of today, to understand the root cause of problems and imagine alternative futures.

Transformation is not just the improvement of services, it is about changing norms in equity, power distribution, ethos, and experience of systems.

Community Centered Design



How it works

The Community Centered Design process can be thought of as a series of intentional conversations moving from initial dreaming together to implementing change. Each conversation creates clarity and makes a product that becomes the starting point for the next conversation.

Some conversations explore possibilities and hold many perspectives. They are intentionally divergent. Other conversations weigh options and make decisions. They are intentionally convergent.

Each conversation is guided by:

A mindset: How are we thinking about the issue? How are we approaching the topic?

Key questions: What questions will this conversation try to answer?

Tools that give structure to our conversations and make them visible to others.



CURRENT SYSTEM

POINT OF CONTACT IS CRITICAL

Serves are not as connected as they might be we refer but we don't meet.

THE SET UP SOLUTION IS:
 We move people into short term accommodation in a hotel.
 A DVO is served.
 The perpetrator is removed from the premises and the women/children go back.
 There is increased risk when the perpetrator is released from prison.

GP REFERRALS ARE ALMOST NON EXISTANT WE DON'T KNOW WHY

THE REFERRALS PROCESS OUT OF DVCS IS OFTEN COMPLICATING IZ DIFFERENT FORMS

WE DON'T HAVE ANY WAY TO FOLLOW UP TO KNOW IF REFERRALS HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE.

THERE IS ZERO CAPACITY FOR US TO GIVE FEEDBACK TO THE SOCIAL WORKER OR REFERRING PARTY

DVCS record actions taken. This database is not shared or connected

THE CURRENT FUP PROCESS WORKS WELL WHERE DVCS, AFP, ACT COORDINATION CPS - VICTIM SUPPORT MEET WEEKLY TO REVIEW CLIENT CASES IN COURT INFORMATION STRIKE FORCE

People rarely engage with services for DV, instead they test the waters and attempt to fix the problem themselves when that occurs they are able to open up + discuss their situation.

We need to be able to take the call, to point people in the right direction where they can get help. Take the call and follow up + make sure people are not falling through the gaps

families often just tell women to get out.

Women feel embarrassed and ashamed of their situation.

We hear from women who are under both emotional & physical assault control

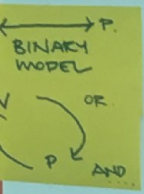
"I wish bloody hell then they will stop"

Women call when they have acknowledged they are experiencing DV.

No money is especially to health services waiting lists long.

When people call one link they want a roof over their kids heads before they are able to talk about DV.

We need to have a shelter available immediately and for more 72 hours to not to lose our window of opportunity and give victims space to separate themselves from abuser and decide

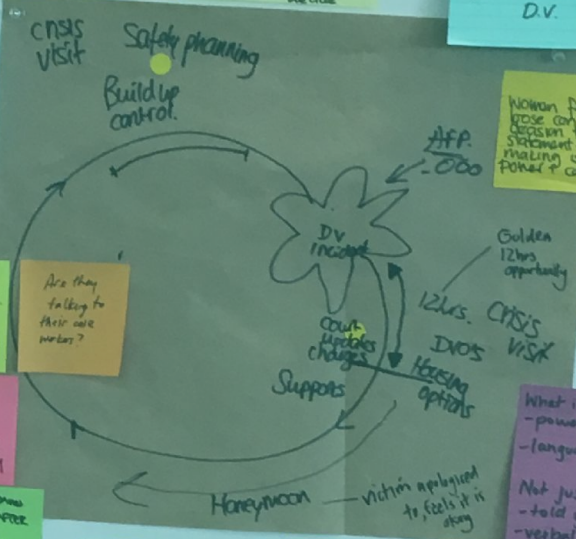


Child protection case notes

- Highlights where the opportunity and where services
- We are frequently out of the system
- "They were taken on away from shelter"
- The current way we have case conference the current we have no influence over the system
- We don't have a case conference unless a crime occurs
- We don't have any way to influence the system for the perpetrator other than we can work on what is different "When they brought that case to the court" "In terms of sentencing DV cases. We need to use that time to address the risk and create the support and support plans when they have that behavior in terms of DV safety and working
- The current practice is to use DV perpetrator
- We need to be able to take the call, to point people in the right direction where they can get help. Take the call and follow up + make sure people are not falling through the gaps
- Collaboration is across the board
- We need to be able to take the call, to point people in the right direction where they can get help. Take the call and follow up + make sure people are not falling through the gaps

DV Experience is not Black and White. It's about hearing stories.

We are crisis driven. We deal with the crisis



Women feel like they have no control about the decision to make a statement or not. Decisions making is connected to power & control.

Women ask why do I keep ending up in violent relationships? Is it me?

We start talking about human rights, the right to dignity, we create a language around reasonable expectations

It's hard to re-establish your identification when you don't have an address

Women can not return to their house to get their identification

Hope, empathy, helping the clients. # Empathy in the client's roles to help a client

Are they talking to their case workers?

IF PEOPLE DO LEAVE IT IS PART OF ANOTHER VERY TOUGH JOURNEY

We help clients build up the confidence and their self-esteem

Clients are isolated. They have been told what to do for years.

DVCS RUNS PROGRAMS TO FILL THE GAP AFTER LEAVING DV. EB & WOOD BUILD UP + EMPOWER. MUMS RATH STEPPING FORWARD

THE DECISION MADE TO ADVISE CLIENTS ON WHAT TO DO + WHAT NEXT IS OFTEN MISSING (DVO)

The first 24 hours after an incident women are in flight or flight mode some things women have no memory of at the incident, a couple of days later they may regret their decision

What is abuse?
 - power abuse
 - language
 - Not just physical!
 - told you're nothing
 - verbal abuse
 - deprived of everything

Self-esteem to leave.

Don't believe they're capable of leaving. Believe the abuse.

How it works

This high-level overview uses a single DNATL initiative—the 3Read23 Literacy Project—to show how Community Centered Design has worked in DNATL. More detail and tools are found in Part B of this playbook.

Women are isolated, living with depression, mental health issues, etc.

THE CURRENTLY WAIT THE PROPERTY HOLDING IS IS MENTAL. REFUGES HAVING TO FILL IN UNPREDICTABLE + COMES UP SLOWLY. WE TAKE ABOUT SUPPORTS FOR RESILIENCE ENDURANCE

many women are very upset + protective of their children + fear they've changed

Interactions can be on a DV cycle. Can be daily, weekly or Ad hoc.

DV all happens happens drugs, mental health, etc.

It's very difficult to find crisis accommodation for women with some IT up + she can ONLY get refuge as a single woman

Women are not always who you think. They come from all socioeconomic situations

THE LINE DOES NOT ALWAYS HAVE THE CAPACITY TO ASSESS HOW RISKY THE PERPETRATOR IS.

WITH IMPLICATIONS TO LOCATION OF HOUSING.

"A mother can take on a lot as long as her kids have food, bed, warm house"

He makes promises it won't happen again. -takes up to 4 times to leave.

Why they leave:
 - seeing affect on kids.
 - fear of violence from another woman.

Very often have to leave their job bc of DV - dismissed - resign

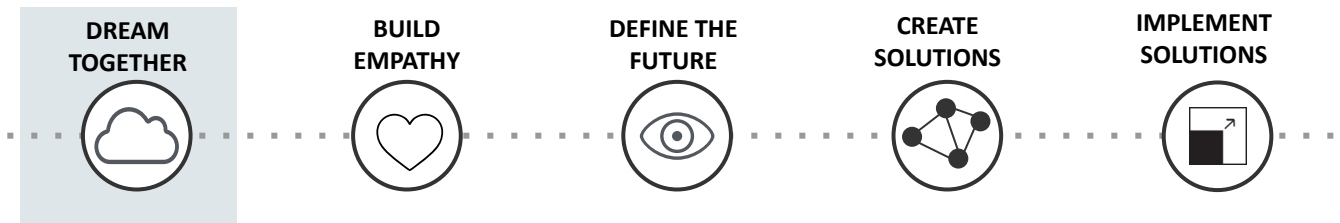
Have left relationship for other reasons - only just came around to idea there's DV.

Stay for years in a violent situation - self medicate with drugs + alcohol.

They feel shame about...

How it works

...the DNATL Story



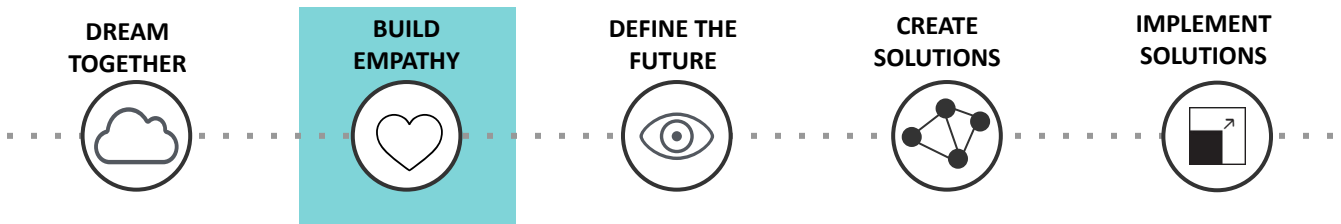
Community leaders, funders, and other collaborators come together to create the vision and intent for a new project. They dream about a possible future together.

In 2015, the School System Implementation Team (SSIT) was concerned about reading scores. Fewer than half of DNATL third grade students could read at grade level. With BHC support, the SSIT agreed to try a new approach to solving this challenge: human centered design. In January, 2016, a design team of early childhood educators and advocates started working with ThinkPlace to learn how human centered design could help us better understand the root causes of low reading scores in our schools.

The design team and SSIT started by defining our new project. We decided to focus on improving third grade reading scores because third grade represents a turning point. Before third grade, students are learning to read. After third grade, students are expected to read to learn and if they can't, they can quickly fall behind.

How it works

...the DNATL Story



After setting the vision and intent by dreaming together, the design team builds empathy with community members through empathetic interviews. This allows the team to hear multiple perspectives and people's lived experiences.

For the Literacy Project, we talked with 27 families and 11 teachers about literacy and their lives. We included families who represented the geographic, cultural, and economic diversity of DNATL.

Once all the interviews were complete, we compared people's stories to develop 10 parent insights and 8 teacher insights.

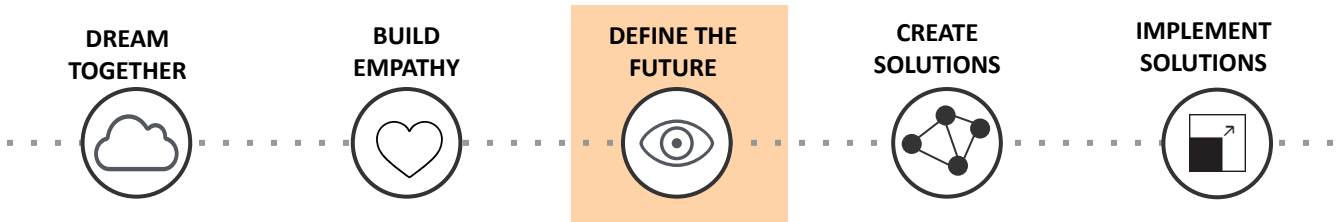
Some of the insights were surprising: We learned that neither parents nor teachers had a shared vision of what it means to be "school ready."

Other insights confirmed and filled out common understanding: Parents are incredibly busy and rush through their days.

Then we shared the insights with everyone: The parents we had interviewed to confirm we had heard them correctly; community leaders; the general public; and elected officials. Our goal was to gain broad support for future changes.

How it works

...the DNATL Story



With a fuller understanding of the current state of the system, the design team can identify the desired future state and set measurable goals. We ask, **“How does the system need to change in order for our desired future state to become reality?”**

Once we had our completed insights, we had a much better picture of what challenges were getting in the way of children learning to read. We stepped back into our strategic mindset to establish a concrete goal.

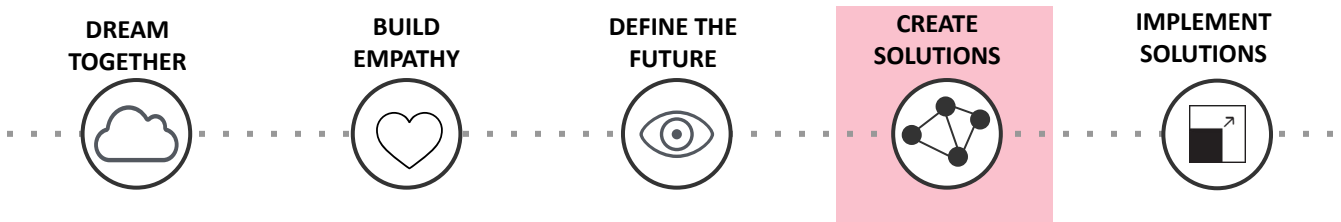
Our goal was audacious (bold, daring): We wanted every third-grade student to read at grade level by 2023. It’s a huge goal. We needed to break it down into manageable pieces without watering down our audaciousness.

We created a timeline of early education, starting at birth, and identified places where systems would need to change, or ‘shift’, if we wanted to reach our goal of all students reading in third grade.

The shifts came from our interviews. Parents had told us what they needed. They needed to know what school readiness looked like and how to help their child become “school ready.” They needed help that reached them where and how they like to communicate. With each shift, we also identified how we would track success.

How it works

...the DNATL Story



The design phase is exciting. It is about being creative and open to new ways of doing things. It is about prototyping, testing, learning, and refining to come up with solutions that will make meaningful change.

To start brainstorming ideas for how to make the systems shift, we invited the community to come to a Literacy Symposium on a weeknight, not knowing how many people would respond. Over 150 people showed up!

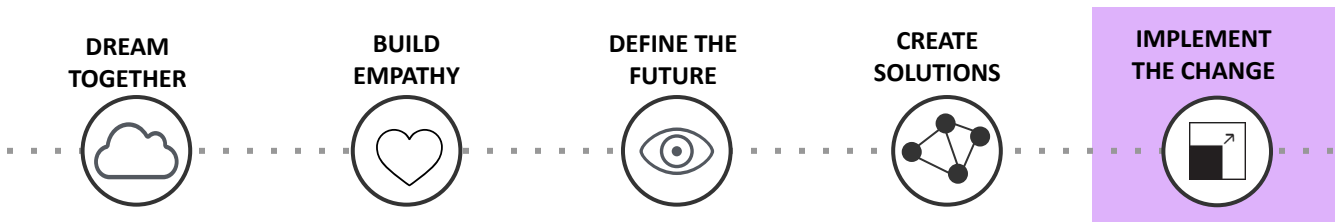
Each table worked together to brainstorm ideas for solutions to one of our insights. No idea was too big or too small—we wanted them all!

After careful evaluation, we chose a handful of solutions to prototype. Prototyping is a way of testing a solution without investing a lot of time or money. Many solutions can start with a paper prototype.

One of the projects that grew out of 3Read23 was a parent texting program we originally called a “Parent Co-Pilot.” We wanted to provide parents with support in helping their children become school ready and to connect parents to community resources. Our first prototype for this solution was a picture of how it would work. The second prototype was three pages of sample texts that we showed to parents and service providers for feedback.

How it works

...the DNATL Story



When we reach the implementation stage, we have confidence in the changes we are implementing, but we set out formal means for learning and evaluation. **What does success look like and how will we measure it?**

After generating ideas, evaluating them, and selecting some to prototype, we were ready to commit to a few ideas that had real promise for change. Each member of the core design team took a lead responsibility for at least one project to take further.

First 5 Del Norte continued to work on a text-based solution for parent support, based on an existing program called Ready4K. The Del Norte Child Care Council increased their efforts to enroll more home daycare providers in quality education programs. The school district pushed forward with a policy ending homework in elementary schools and experimented with what families could do instead.

We celebrated early wins and kept the larger community involved in the work through a second Literacy Symposium. This also helped hold us accountable by sharing progress on the measures of success we had adopted.

How it works

...the DNATL Story



3Read23 Today

'3READ23' LITERACY INITIATIVE

A child who reads will be an adult who succeeds

Del Norte parents, pre-school teachers and the community unite to make sure our kids are ready for kindergarten

When 5-year-old Marcus Grant graduated preschool and started kindergarten in September, 2020, it marked a milestone for the "3READ23 Literacy Initiative," a program designed to ensure that all third-grade students in Del Norte County and Tribal Lands are reading at third grade level by 2023.

"Marcus is a perfect example of how successful this initiative is," said team member Melodee Mitchell, executive director of the Del Norte Childcare Council. "Another is the tremendous increase in public awareness — with our preschool teachers, parents and community members — of the importance of teaching our littles to read at an early age so they are more likely to succeed."

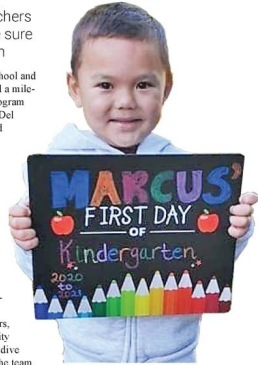
Marcus was among a group of local preschoolers identified by the literacy initiative soon after its launch in 2016. The initiative, sponsored Building Healthy Communities Del Norte, was developed by educators, business and community leaders, parents and nonprofits. A select group of community partners called the Core Design Team took a deep dive into the school district's low student test scores. The team began an 18-month journey of empathy interviews with parents and educators. They synthesized the information and produced a "journey map" that not only revealed the community's story of literacy, but guided collaborative efforts to create solutions and system changes to achieve the third-grade literacy goals.

Establishing good reading skills is more than just learning the ABCs. It starts with families having access to quality books, understanding the importance of reading every day, attending the right preschool or daycare, having support for day-to-day life, and other critical skills to be successful in kindergarten. It also starts with giving preschool teachers and daycare staff information, resources and encouragement to help children prepare for kindergarten.

"The preschool teachers and their staff are in the trenches with the children everyday — they are the true heroes," Mitchell said.

There is still plenty to be done to insure the success of our children and, for 2021, the members of the 3READ23 Core Design Team rededicated themselves to building on their success. Their immediate plans include public outreach and workshops to re-energize parents and teachers about early childhood literacy.

For more information about 3READ23, contact Melodee Mitchell at the Del Norte Childcare Council at 7070-464-8311. Or online at www.facebook.com/3Read23.



Marcus Grant, one of many preschool graduates on their way to reading by grade level by third grade.

SIGNS OF SUCCESS:

- Raised awareness of and quality of child care through increased participation in quality care programs, parental knowledge and choice of preschool opportunities.
- Sparked teacher/provider enrollment boosts in programs such as First 5 Quality Counts, DMC-CC Education Network, and Early Head Start for Family Child Care.
- Created preschool professional development opportunities.
- Promoted the Family Resource Center's involvement groups and "Parent Cafe" to provide parents with resources and help them feel connected.
- Created a free "Ready4K" texting program that provides parents with daily tips and information to help kids be ready for kindergarten.

The 3Read23 core design team has changed over time. The assessment tests used by the school district have changed, too. Our original evaluation plan has had to be adjusted to available data. And, of course, two years of COVID-impacted learning has upended everything.

The current design team is focused on current K-2 students who are struggling with reading. They are working to understand the larger context for these students and how the district might best support them.

The needle has moved. When we started, 35% of kindergarteners tested as "ready" for kindergarten. This year, even with COVID, 45% were ready. Among students whose parents receive Ready4K text messages and participate in the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library book distribution program, that number is much higher: Almost 2/3 of those students were ready for school.

An aerial photograph of a river with a large, light-colored rock formation in the center. The water is clear, showing the riverbed and the surrounding landscape. The text "Success stories" is overlaid on a dark teal rectangular background in the lower-left quadrant.

Success stories

DNATL Success Stories



We used one DNATL story to illustrate the community centered design approach to community change, but there are many other success stories from community centered design and community organizing:

- A listening campaign among non-profit leaders led to the creation of the Non-Profit Alliance, a support network for local non-profits
- Sunset High School students used community organizing strategies to bring better lunches and gym equipment to their school
- The Community Food Council did empathy interviews with people using local food pantries and the insights from those interviews helped shape the Council's new Pacific Pantry when it was founded a year later
- Yurok Tribal members organized to revive cultural burning practices on the upper Yurok Reservation
- Empathy interviews in the medical community led to the development of a pre-K through high school Health Career Pathway that exposes students to a broad range of health careers

DNATL continues to work to transform our community, using all the tools in our toolbox. We build on the changes we've already made and stay grounded in people's authentic lived experiences to guide the changes that are around the next bend in our river.

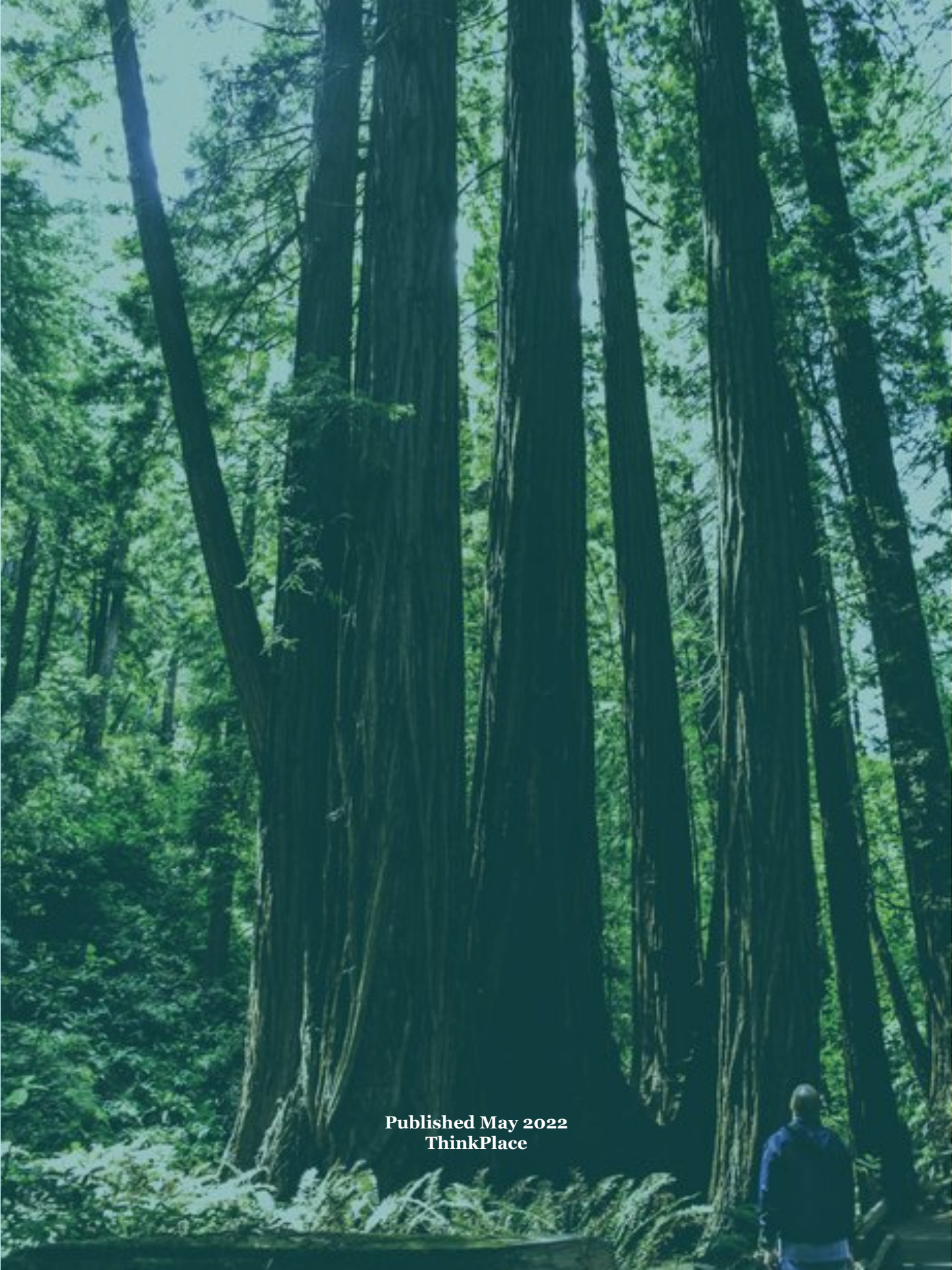
DNATL Story

...what has changed?

As the Building Healthy Communities initiative was starting in 2010, we were building a new playground and community garden at a health clinic. A high school student looked at a scale model we'd built and said, "You know that's never going to happen here, right? It's too nice for Crescent City." The scarcity mindset and community narrative of loss made it hard for people not only to imagine something different, but to hope for something better.

That's no longer true. Through community organizing and community centered design, many DNATL residents have seen positive change happen *because they made it happen*. Students banished Styrofoam from school cafeterias. All preschools—public, private, and Head Start programs—coordinate professional development days and staff attend joint training. Voters are holding elected officials accountable at candidate forums.

People now believe our community can be better because they have seen it work. That's our community's new narrative.



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