



Part one of a three-part series on private/public partnerships

Private/public partnerships are promoted as a collaborative way to bring people and resources together across sectors. A recent example is the development of senior housing in San Francisco's Bayview Hunters Point community. We are proud to be affiliated with this project and have witnessed the many twists and turns it has taken over the years. We asked Cathy Davis, executive director of the Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Services, Inc. (BHPMSS) in San Francisco, CA to share the specifics of her partnership so you imagine what a partnership could look like for your organization or institution. Her story is specific to her community: your story will be specific to yours.

We started our interview asking Davis to share the importance of the senior housing being built. "The new senior housing will make it possible for seniors to age in a secure and familiar place -- their own community -- close by to friends and family. The housing is part of our vision for an Aging Campus, a concept that is already reflected in many of our current programs," she began. "When fully completed, our new supportive housing and state-of-the-art senior center will offer Bayview seniors everything necessary to make their lives comfortable and fulfilling, including: affordable housing, a safe and nurturing environment; a wide choice of planned activities (recreational, spiritual and educational); special events; preventive healthcare services; and excellent daily nutrition. We will continue the exceptional level of care for which BHPMSS is already well known."

The project had multiple partners. It was initiated by long-term BHPMSS executive director Dr. George Davis – Cathy Davis' husband –who was a community organizer, gerontologist and political strategist. He had a vision for what he wanted and was willing to tell everyone about it. He enrolled the board of directors, staff, all the city officials, politicians and the community at large in creating the "Aging Campus".

Cathy Davis shared the details with us: "Our developer became our partner because of their respect for community building. As a for-profit developer they work with community nonprofits, rather than compete with them. Our relationship with the City is one of advocate and funder. We attended meetings, workshops and listening sessions to advocate for what was needed in our community. City funders utilize a community process and you have to be willing to play the game, the way it is played. The City benefits from a large community process that includes stakeholders and points the way. They want to fund popular ideas that have widespread support and solve a problem."

Just a reminder: "A private/public partnership benefits all parties working together for a

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common purpose that ultimately benefits the intended clients," Davis extols. "Each party has their own interest that has to be served in order to move forward. Collectively you have to be able to work as a team."

Next week: Accountability and trust

Learn more about BHPMSS at <http://bhpmss.org/>

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