Community Building Initiative (CBI) article published in the Journal of Community Psychology

Below are excerpts from the article published in the Journal of Community Psychology from our evaluation of First 5 Sacramento’s CBI events.

The article is titled “Increasing Social Capital and Personal Efficacy Through Small-Scale Community Events.”

METHODS
Survey Instrument and Measures
The survey instrument included items to assess a number of outcomes related to First 5 Sacramento services...as well as those hypothesized to be related to CBI: Community connectedness, neighborhood cohesion, utilization of community resources, and efficacy.

Community connectedness was assessed by three items related to parents’ social networks... the number of people in their neighborhood who they knew by name, the number of people who they visit with in each other’s home, and the number of relatives or friends who live in their neighborhood.

Levels of agreement with each item, such as “My neighborhood is a good place to raise children” and “People in my neighborhood can be trusted,” were combined to represent neighborhood cohesion.

For utilization of community resources, parents were asked “are you or anyone in your household” receiving 12 different types of community resources...Finally, efficacy, investigated the degree to which parents perceived they had control over their lives.

Attendees of CBI events rarely know that the event is sponsored by the First 5 Sacramento Commission.

Thus, assessing attendance could not be achieved by asking survey participants if they had recently been to a CBI event. We addressed this challenge by including on the interview instrument general descriptions of six types of CBI events.

Field interviewers read each description and asked parents if they had attended an event “like this” in the past six months. Follow-up questions pertained to the name and the (estimated) date and location of each event. These responses were compared with a master list of CBI events...Parents were then placed into one of three categories for each survey time period. Our hypothesis was that measures of social capital would be lowest among those who did not attend a community event, followed by those who attended an event, with parents attending a CBI event reporting the highest levels of social capital.

RESULTS
A total of 995 CBI events occurred over the three-year period. Our sampling and measurement methodologies captured attendance for 100 CBI events.

Attendees of CBI events reported the highest number of neighbors known by name and people who visit each other’s homes, as well as greater levels of neighborhood cohesion and efficacy. In addition, CBI-event attendees accessed significantly more community resources during the previous six months. Finally, significantly fewer friends and relatives lived in the neighborhoods of parents who had not participated in a community event.

DISCUSSION
We found positive relationships between CBI event attendance and higher levels of social capital among a population with limited education, employment, and English-speaking skills. This included an increased sense of trust of neighbors, which may have resulted from the new acquaintances and friendships developed from attending a CBI event.