

**BRENDA RHODES MILLER**

MODERATOR: Hello everybody. Thank you for coming back after the break. We are going to get started here in just a second. I did want to remind everybody that this session is actually going to be recorded, so if you have any objections now, whatever the phrase is, you should leave the room I suppose, but we really don't want you to leave.

We are going to have an opportunity to have some really good conversation today about strategic relationships, collaborations, partners, all of those really important, fundamental issues that we've already been talking about throughout this conference and that we want to continue the conversation on.

If you have any questions or when you're participating in this session, please use the microphone. We'll either have you get up and come to the microphone. Or if we end up with more of a discussion, we can certainly pass it around. But you will need to use the microphone in order to be recorded. So, we've got about an hour and a half and we did want to go ahead and get started.

We have with us Brenda Rhodes Miller. Anybody who is from this area is going to know Brenda Rhodes Miller. She is

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the Founding Executive Director for the D.C. Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. She has over 20 years of senior level experience in non-profit management. She has worked in a variety of locations, including the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and with Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan D.C. She has really done a phenomenal job in the city of D.C. Her charge for the D.C. Campaign was to cut the rate of teen pregnancy in half by 2005. And they succeeded. According to the Department of Health, they were able to do that. So they have done a tremendous job with getting the conversation started and keeping it going and engaging partners to move the health of young people forward.

They do a lot of training through the D.C. Campaign. So I think we are in for a real treat to have Brenda here with us today. And I have to say, this is my most exciting part, she is the author of three books here, *The Church Ladies' Divine Desserts: Heavenly Recipes and Sweet Recollections*, sounds really pretty interesting, *The Laying on of Hands*, and *The Church Ladies' Celestial Suppers and Sensible Advice*. So with that, I'd like to welcome Brenda Rhodes Miller.

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MS. BRENDA RHODES MILLER: Thank you. Now if you don't have toys and want toys, let me know and I'll pass the box to you. If you do have toys, you can play with them throughout the session. You just have to return them at the end.

I'd like to thank Erica McKinney who is on D.C. Campaign staff. She is our newest staff member. She is in charge of all social media, video production and she did the slides for this session. And I couldn't have done this without her because I just don't have that gift. So, this is the disclaimer. Everybody has to read that. Nobody's endorsing this. So, go ahead.

Okay. D.C. Campaign was founded in 1999. And, as Alison said, our mission was to cut the teen pregnancy rate in half by 2005. We met that and exceeded it. And so the Board said great. Let's cut it in half again by 2015.

D.C. Campaign was built on research by Lake, Snell, Perry. They polled like 1,500 residents. And based on the information they got from that polling, we created the Campaign. We learned that in the city, everyone has a role to play and that's what the citizens agreed on. That

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welfare reform was really part of the impetus for the city wanting a private effort to reduce teen pregnancy. And we realized that one little organization couldn't do it alone.

So we provide leadership. We constantly talk about our mission of cutting the rate in half by 2015. We work to build a community consensus. We rely on research, research, research. We only advocate for research-based programs. We insist that the government only fund research-based programs to some degree of success. And we cultivate relationships.

Even though Washington D.C. is the nation's capitol, it's kind of small. And so everybody eventually knows everybody else which is why the relationship building is so essential. Because you never know who is going to be in another position that could help or hurt you. So we always, always, always try to build our relationships.

Okay. So January 1<sup>st</sup>, I'm at home and I'm watching the Tournament of Roses Parade whose theme is "Building Dreams, Friendships and Memories". And the Rose Bowl parade was televised on RFD-TV, the most important network in rural America. Branson, Missouri "Someone you love is always

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playing in Branson" was the sponsor of the Tournament of Roses. And Paula "more butter" Deen was the Grand Marshal.

Now the most genius piece of this was that RFD-TV sponsored a float, see the Native American float, that celebrated one nation. And they had people from Native American communities all over the country participating on the float and in the parade.

Well, I thought this was so brilliant because there I am in my pajama's watching the Tournament of Roses Parade. And I would have never ever, ever expected to see these things together. Not only that, but it worked.

You know, we all come to partnerships and relationships and collaborations with our own biases, our own expectations, our own doubts. RFD-TV I'm thinking, hmm, rural America, Paula Deen, Branson, Missouri and then this Indian float. But they had obviously put a lot of thought and a lot of planning into making this something that was inclusive. It didn't happen by accident. It was unexpected and each of those parties brought something unique to the partnership.

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So I watched the whole parade. I don't know if you know this, but everything in the Tournament of Roses Parade has to be living. So they might grind up shells to make peoples' faces colors. It's not just flowers. That's what I thought it was. Did you know? I didn't know it either. Or they might have acorns. So for the bead work on the Native American float, they had all these little kernels of corn and cranberries that they dropped in individually to simulate the bead work. Well, I don't know about you, but random things like that I find fascinating.

But the partnership, each and every one of those parties got equal time during the parade. Each of them got to sort of strut their stuff. And it just struck me that that's exactly the kind of partnership that I should try to cultivate for my organization where nobody would have expected it.

I didn't know where they televised the Tournament of Roses Parade because I don't know if I've watched it since I was a little kid, but the fact that it was on RFD-TV, which is the most important network in rural America, just struck me. If that network is ten years old, has anybody watched it besides me?

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Q: What channel is it?

MS. MILLER: Here in D.C., it's channel 345 on Verizon. I don't know what it is on Comcast and RCN. It will be on RFD next year too. Apparently, a guy started it in his garage or something. And he brought together all this sort of random programming and now it's got stuff about horses. It has bull auctions, you know, things that you wouldn't think necessarily I would find fascinating. But I do because it's so unexpected.

I hope you will look for this network because it often does things like this where it has partners who apparently have nothing in common. But because they're brought together under this umbrella, on Saturday night they have Big Al's Poker Palace in Omaha, Nebraska. I'm just saying, it's remarkable.

But anyway, when you have a partnership like this where everybody is coming from a completely different place, you've got to make sure that you have an honest and candid conversation about what biases you might bring to the conversation and you have to be sure that whatever hidden agendas might exist are brought out to the table.

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What can you see might be some of the problems with a partnership like this? Anybody? If you were asked to be in a partnership like this, what might be some of the problems you would identify? Yes ma'am.

Q: Well I can answer your first question better than your second.

MS. MILLER: Okay, well either one.

Q: Well Paula Deen may not have a sensitivity to the issues that Native Americans have.

MS. MILLER: Okay, and so you'd want to make sure that there was a conversation about that. What are some of the other issues that you might see with a partnership like this? If you were just looking at it and going, huh? What are some of the other things that you might want to make sure were talked about? Go ahead. What did you say?

Q: Roles.

MS. MILLER: Well "more butter" Paul Deen would love rolls. What kind of roles? Tell us more about that.

Q: Just responsibilities, who is responsible for what. Paul Deen is on Food Network or something, right? So I think certainly understanding that everybody's role and responsibility for whatever this is. And that just because you might be on television or the television station

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doesn't mean that you're not an equitable player in the success of this event.

MS. MILLER: Okay, so you would want to make sure the roles were really clear and that everybody got equal time. It doesn't do any good if one partner is in the spot light and the other ones are in the shadows, because they won't feel as if they're getting anything out of it.

Going back to the recipe thing because I do write cookbooks, here is the recipe for strong relationships. And all of those things are essential. When you're forming relationships to advance mission, you want to make sure that the right people are involved. And that means that if you have a meeting that's going to be a planning meeting or a meeting where commitments are going to be made, you don't want people at that meeting who can't make commitments.

You want to make sure that people at whatever level in the organization that can make decisions are the ones that you're engaging. Because there's nothing worse than having a series of meeting and one organization sends five different people. And all of those people each time say, oh, I have to go back and check. So you may as well not have had the meeting. Because if they have to go back and

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check, then you can't proceed. So you want to make sure the right people are involved, the decision maker at whatever level it is.

You want to make sure that the people you have engaged in your forging this relationship are people who do what they say they will do. Do you ever work with organizations and you just know when you enter into the meeting that they're going to let you down? Now that doesn't mean that I've changed my mind about expecting that each persons' motives are as noble as your own. But in all of our communities there are probably people who don't do what they say they are going to do. Did you have your hand up?

Q: I was just thinking that sometimes that happens because there are certain groups that you have to have at the table just because of who they are involved with or who they are politically. I don't know if there's really a good way to deal with that, especially if they have to be there just for appearances sake.

MS. MILLER: Well, you know, we run into that from time to time. And I think that what you gain from appearances sake, you lose so much because they're not an active participant and

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they're not an equal partner. It might be worth having an offline conversation with whoever it is or whoever it is that said to you that you have to have them involved, and explain why that's not going to be fair to the other people who are in the coalition or the collaboration or whatever. Because there's nothing worse.

Q: How do you do that without burning the bridges? Because you still may need to just have people, the ones that require you to have them there. You know, they may have some other interest in mind for why certain parties have to sit at the table. And if you're just the coordinator, you're not the person that's highest up to make that decision. So what's really the best way to say, oh, we're glad you showed up. But don't come again.

MS. MILLER: Well no. That probably wouldn't be where I'd start. It's a really awkward position to be in. And again, if you're in that position, you're not the ultimate decision maker so you can't necessarily kick people out of the room. But what you can do is talk to whoever it is that gave you the directive, not in a combative way, not in a confrontational manner, not in an accusatory way. But just say, you know, I was really interested in your

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thinking about having whoever engaged in this process. They have sort of unfortunate track record. Tell me about why you want us to, you know, tell me more about it.

Because that person may have a completely different perception of whoever it is than you do. And they may say, so and so is really the person who needs to be in this meeting. And so and so may not be the one who ever came. So you might want to let them know that. Because if they've got the juice to get the right person to come to the meeting, then they need to use it. As opposed to sort of slaughtering you by having the wrong people and expecting that they're going to do something they can't do. What did you want to say?

Q: I am like so with you on all of this. When you put all of this inside state bureaucracy, where you don't have transparency in communication and you're not even allowed to go to that person because it's three levels above you and that's too close to the governor, it seems really challenging to implement this kind of thing. Working in a non-profit, when you go into the community is so different than being a person in State government and trying to go and do community development which is the challenge.

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MS. MILLER: Do you have a question or a comment?

Q: Boy, this is so close to something that I've dealt with with this grant that it's almost scary. Basically, sometimes it will work itself out. Because there's a person that was put on this committee with a vote. And we're not sure what an advisory committee votes on, which I keep asking. But nonetheless, and I don't I did, I went to the top and I said this person actually has taken money away from us. They have stabbed us in the back before.

No, no, they say they're actively involved. They know our mission statement, that kind of thing. And so through a series of 12 meetings, this person has shown up one time after they were adamant that this person must be on. So it's kind of settled itself. Because what kind of voice can a person have that doesn't put any energy into it and she is the director of this other program. So I'm hoping that it will work itself out and that it will just become a non-issue. Because how can a person who has never been in any of the discussions actually be a voting whatever they're going to vote on kind of person?

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They can just be like bumps on the log I guess. Because many times those are the people that don't respond. They might be sitting there. But they're not volunteering. They're not really adding much to the conversation. And unfortunately, what's ideal versus what's the reality of how little say you have, then we just have to deal with it sometimes.

MS. MILLER: Has anybody else had similar experiences? Go ahead.

Q: I think about the 80,000 committees that I feel like I'm on and some of which I spearhead. And I think that at least one of the tactics that I've used ... and it's hit or miss because everybody is individual ... is to engage with them outside of it, get their opinion, sort of brainstorm a little bit offline. And then at the next meeting, bring their idea as a great idea to the table in the forefront of the room and give them the credit for something. And I think it seems to sort of like tapping into what it is, whether it's personally or in their agency or organization, that they are passionate about and somehow finding a way to tie that into what you're doing. But sometimes you just have to pretend like you're not there.

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MS. MILLER: Go ahead.

Q: Or give them a job. Give them some responsibilities. Especially if they like to pontificate or they think they want a role but don't realize the breadth of the work. Give them a job and, like you said, it will come out in the wash and others will see. There's a lot to peer opinions. And when the rest of the group, 90% of the group, knows the red herring in the group, it will work itself out, whether it's the mob going to the mayor. And I'm speaking from a local level. I apologize. I'm one of the localities working with the State of Tennessee. But it can often work itself out that way.

MS. MILLER: And perhaps some combination of all of this advice would work. Having a conversation with the deadwood, not in the middle of the meeting where you're going to make the lecture, but having a conversation with them as an aside before the meeting, after the meeting, some other time when it's not stressful, you might find out that they don't want to be on the committee any more than you want them to be there. But they have to do it.

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So then sometimes you can, as you say, find out there might be something that this person really could do that would be a good thing and if it's a small thing, if they're going to do it well, let them do it. If it's nothing and they're not going to oppose you ... I mean, sometimes we work with people and the only reason is because we don't want to wake up and see picket signs in front of the door.

So if you can just get somebody to agree that we're not going to offer any opposition, even if they do nothing else, sometimes that's worth its weight in gold. But you won't know that unless you approach that person, person to person and with courtesy and respect, and have a fairly honest and open conversation, assuming that their motives are as noble as yours.

It's scary to do it that way. Because most of us don't like to have difficult conversations. But we're in a pretty difficult field. And if we can't have difficult conversations, then we probably need to practice a little bit more. But sometimes that's worth doing.

I agree with you. The weight of a group, peer pressure as we always tell kids, the peer pressure can sometimes make

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people who are on a committee who aren't contributing or pulling their weight suddenly realize that they have a meeting at the same time every month. And honestly, they just can't do this, gee, I'm so sorry or not. But it's worth a try.

But don't assume anything. You've got to talk about it. And you've got to talk about it in a way that leaves the person some room. It doesn't make them lose face. It doesn't embarrass them. It doesn't make them feel as if you're hectoring or lecturing. And that's not always easy to do.

Okay, I don't know. I thought we were going to have a bigger group. So do you think you all could sing Match Maker? Do you know the tune? Who's got a pitch pipe? Do you know it? [singing] Match Maker, Match Maker make me a match. Is anybody singing? Come on, let's hear it.

Q: Tone it down and I'll join you.

MS. MILLER: All right, well somebody else start because I can't.

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Q: [singing] Matchmaker, Matchmaker make me a match. Find me a find, catch me a catch. Matchmaker, Matchmaker look through your book, and make me a perfect match.

MS. MILLER: Okay. Now, why are we singing this one?

Q: So we can be embarrassed.

MS. MILLER: Well, I think public embarrassment is good if it's a whole group being embarrassed. Individuals, no. The group, sure. The reason we're doing that is because I think that matchmakers can teach us a lot as we build relationships, collaborations and partnerships. Sometimes you need a third party.

One of the things I found working in churches is that it doesn't really work for me to call up a pastor and go, "Reverend, I would really like to do this 'Have Faith in Youth' program at your church." He'll say, "Well that's really nice. Let's talk about it." And then the meeting never happens. But if you're a member of his church and I say, "Do you think you could help me get a meeting with pastor?" And you say, "sure". And then you take me into meet with him, then he's actually going to listen to me.

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Nothing about me has changed. But I have the blessing of someone whose opinion does matter to him, a tithing member or one who is threatening not to tithe, whatever the case.

So third party involvement is sometimes necessary. If you're not making progress getting to someone or if you're finding a lot of obstacles, try to figure out who that person knows. I don't know if LinkedIn does this. But in most communities you can kind of figure out the threads, who knows who and who is connected to who. And you may find that getting that third party involvement will really help you advance your partnership or collaboration.

And don't be shy about what you bring to a relationship. If you've got access to 500 parents and you're working with a group that really wants to have access to 45 parents, you've already won because you've got something that they want. But be clear about what you want and need. What are some of the things that you want in the relationships that you're developing to advance your mission? Anything. What do you want out of those relationships?

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Q: Get programs to work together and putting in place programs to support our parenting and pregnant teens in the community, building that infrastructure.

MS. MILLER: Okay, so you want to build an infrastructure. That's really clear. What are some other things you want and need as you build relationships?

Q: Their vote or their silence, their unopposed or abstention.

MS. MILLER: Okay, you either want their vote in favor or you want them to keep quiet. What are some other things you want? Do you want anybody's mailing list? Go ahead.

Q: Continued buy-in and maintaining energy.

MS. MILLER: Okay, so you want them to keep your project going by being supportive of it and saying, "This is a great program. I'm really into it. I'll keep doing it." What are some of the other things you want from these relationships?

Q: To, I think, better understand each other's language.

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MS. MILLER: Talk some more about that. That's really important.

Q: I think, for us, very often in the Department of Public Health, we work with our State Department of Education. And I think we all are saying essentially the same things, or at least have the same goals or outcomes in mind. But the way that we say them, because of our fields, are totally different. And so it takes five weeks to realize we're all saying the same thing. It's great. Sometimes you've got to go through a storm to get to the sunshine or whatever. We've found writing things down is really helpful. But yes, learning each other's language is something I want.

MS. MILLER: That is so essential. When my children were little, I was in this group called Jack and Jill. And Jack and Jill has a family planning committee. Well, I was working at Planned Parenthood. And I thought, wow. What a progressive organization this is. Except it wasn't at all about birth control and contraception. It was about planning activities for the families that were in the organization. I had been going for at least a couple of

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years thinking I'm going to get on that committee and it wasn't that at all.

So knowing what the words that people say really mean is really essential. Sometimes I just have to ask people, "Excuse me, what does that mean?" And then people look at you like you're a dunce. Don't you know anything? But it's always better to ask than not to. So be really clear about what you want and need which may mean getting their language translated so you totally understand it.

Don't try to get everyone to agree on everything. In this field, we want everybody to agree about whatever it is. We have a list, like 27 things we want everybody to agree on. But really you only need to pick one thing and make sure everyone agrees on that.

Like you want parenting teens to succeed. Now the definition of success might be different. So you might want to say that you want all parenting teens to graduate from high school. Or you want something else that's really clear and that you can measure. But just pick that one thing.

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Q: I want to give an example of one of the projects that we've worked on with the Latino community, working with a lot of different organizations that are interested in improving the wellbeing of Latinos in the United States. We published a consensus statement around the issue of preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy. And there is no way we can get everyone to agree to everything we want them to say. But we decided that it was important enough to get everyone to agree with the basic operating principle that teen pregnancy isn't something that we want for our youth. It was a long process to get people to say here is something I can live with, not everyone should have contraception. We couldn't get everyone to agree to that. So, I just . . . that was interesting. It was really helpful.

MS. MILLER: That's an excellent point. It really is a long process to get everybody to agree on just one thing. And I think that that's something that often, when you're forming partnerships and relationships, you really want them to agree with you about everything. You really want them to say that every school should have a school-based clinic and every school-based clinic should offer all methods of contraception. And people are like, no, no, no I don't

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want to do that. Then you have to step back and try to think, well, what is it that we can agree on? We've done a lot of ... well, I'll tell you about that later.

And then put everything in writing. Put everything in writing. Any meeting that's important enough to attend is important enough to take some notes. It doesn't have to be elaborate. You don't have to do it like minutes, unless it's an organization that requires you legally to keep minutes, in which case of course you do. But a lot of times we meet and we don't write anything down. And then we wonder why people don't know what the deal is. We try to put everything down on paper and then send out notes after roundtables, after coalition meetings, after whatever.

So that everyone at least knows what we thought happened. And if people disagree they can always e-mail back and go, no. That's not what I thought happened. And then we may have a whole round robin of e-mails until we get to someplace that seems to be clear that we all agree on.

As I said earlier, when this workshop was first assigned to me, it was partnerships and collaborations. I have a lot

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of lawyers on my board. And we, at D.C. Campaign, used to always talk about all of our partnerships. And they said to me that partnership has legal applications. Who knew? Did you all already know that the IRS ... you did. See, you should have been doing this workshop. You could have spared us.

I didn't. I had no idea that this was a legal definition of a partnership. So now we don't call all of those collaborations partnerships. But then we began calling them ... and collaboration is a term or art in the business world. So we figured, okay, well, we're just buds? No, we have to say something. So we started looking at ways that you could make relationships not always sound like a romance. Because you know, that's what we think of as relationships.

But these are some of the values that you have in a relationship, whether it's a working relationship or whether it's another kind of relationship. Everybody has a clear sense of purpose. What are we in this for? You all are in it to make sure that pregnant and parenting teens, whatever that word is in your mission. You agree on strategies. You were talking about programs. You want

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people to get on board and build an infrastructure. So you have common values. You don't want pregnant and parenting teens to be homeless, to drop out, never to be employed, to have six children before they turn 20. There are some common things that you can agree on in common.

In a relationship, you rise to certain behavioral standards. You treat everyone in that group as if they have something valuable to contribute or something valuable at least if they withhold it. And you have a mission. Having a mission could just be that we're going to have three meetings without anybody storming out. Oh, you've had people storming out? Everybody has had people storm out before? I see. I thought that was just us. But you have to be realistic about what you can achieve in any given set of circumstances.

I remember once we were doing a strength-based parenting roundtable. And we had ... I won't mention the names because we still work with them ... we had one group that would not allow us to put its name on the same sheet of paper with another group.

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Well, okay. So what do you do with that one? Do you decide which group you want more? So we told both of them, if you want to cosponsor, you can. But we can't decide which of you is more important to list as a cosponsor. So what would you like us to do? The group that was the most adamant said, well, as long as you put us on a different line. Okie dokie. That's what we did.

It sounds silly, but have you been there, done that? Whether you call it working together, whether you call it building relationships, you have to be attuned to peoples' sensitivities and take them into consideration and try to honor them to the degree you can without being completely disruptive of whatever you've tried to do.

Having said that, with these two weirdo groups, you always want to not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. This is Erica's thing, thinking outside of the box. Isn't that cute? She's so good. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone when you're looking for people or organizations to help you achieve the mission. You will find them in the most unlikely places. Remember, they don't have to agree with you about everything. They just have to agree with you about that one important thing. If

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you get the same old people doing the same old thing all the time, it's going to be kind of dull. And you'll find your work is really tedious and you'll hate it. But if you form unusual and unexpected partnerships, relationships, collaborations, often they'll be stronger and more effective. Because people bring new things to the project.

I wanted to talk to you a little bit about our Secondary Prevention Coalition. When we started, our mission was to cut teen pregnancy in half, blah, blah, blah. But there were a lot of programs already in existence in the District. And most of them were hospital-based programs. There was one at Washington Hospital Center, one at Children's Hospital National Medical Center, one at Columbia Hospital for Women.

They provided contraceptive services, prenatal care and that kind of stuff. There were a lot of government programs. And at that point, when we started in '99, most of them didn't know about each other and they didn't work together. It was pretty fragmented.

So we had a lot of individual conversations with each and every program. And agency and then we had some small group

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sessions and then we finally had a couple of big meetings where we tried to figure out who was doing what. We actually stuck paper on the wall and everybody had to write down what they were doing. It was pretty basic. But then we saw that there were some common threads to it. We tried to unite all these advocates in youth-serving and legal experts and providers who were working with pregnant and parenting teens. And they agreed that what they wanted to do was prevent the next pregnancy. I think that basically the only thing they could agree on with the first four-hundred-and-seventy-two meetings. But it did provide an opportunity for networking. So people got to know what each other was doing and how they could piggyback on other projects.

We also used the Secondary Prevention Coalition as a way to make sure that everything we found out about district government programs and services we could share with other programs because there wasn't a really straight line for that kind of thing. And it increased program collaboration and it decreased fragmentation. So now, a lot of the programs that are still in existence actually work together on an ongoing basis. And we found that it's really a great source of energy for the primary prevention people.

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Because they've seen that this actually can happen and it doesn't have to always be a battle.

Again, operating principles. I know this is corny. But it really helped us to get everybody to agree, like you said, the consensus statement. The thing about these operating principles is that we wanted to make the focus the people that were being served as opposed to the people doing the service. So this focuses really heavily on teens. They should all be treated with courtesy and respect. They're the experts on their own lives.

We might work with teens every day and we might think we know all there is to know. But whenever we do programs about any teen issue, we always try to have a teen panel. Because I think that they speak with a different level of authority than any of us can. For a while people will go: "They don't know what they're talking about." Well, I think they really do.

Like when we had a program on teen fathers, we had seven teen fathers. And the thing they talked about the most which surprised everyone was that they really wanted to have a job so that they could help take care of their

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babies. And they really wished they didn't have so much conflict with the mother of their babies.

Some programs address job training and some address parenting. But it was that conflict with the mother part that a lot of people weren't addressing. And I think that some of the fatherhood programs now are focusing more on that, having heard this from not just one, but a bunch of boys who were teen fathers.

Teens who are parents have - well, you can read this. These are the operating principles. But the many . . . effective way to reach teens is the one that was the hardest to get people to agree on. Because everyone thought that the way that they reached teens was the only way to do it. And if you didn't do it that way then you weren't doing it right. And we all know that working with any group of people, that's not the case. The fact that no one has all the answers is the one that is often the hardest for people to agree on, too. Because we all think that whatever it is that we're doing is the best.

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Q: I wanted to ask you, this set and the other set of operating principles, did you come up with these with your group?

MS. MILLER: Yes.

Q: You did, and the other ones too?

MS. MILLER: Yes. With the Secondary Prevention Coalition, we really did ... I would probably say we probably had like 35 different meetings, either individual, small group, bigger group. And at each of those, we tried to get people to say what was in the way of them working with other people? What is it that they wanted? What were their wants, needs wishes? We took notes of everything until we could distill it to this and send it out to everybody and said: "Do you all agree that this is what we should be saying? Do you all agree that this is what the Coalition should be doing?"

And so we winnowed it down. At one point, we must have had like sixty different things that we thought the Coalition could do. And there were people who adamantly disagreed with some or the other.

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Q: So probably for most of us, we've already submitted our project description of what we're doing, which might have been the vision of somebody else who wrote the grant. Now we're charged with implementing this. And I'm not sure that that step really has happened yet. And what we say we're going to do is already in writing. So how do we rectify this little gap?

MS. MILLER: Well, what you say you're going to do, let's just say that's your mission, that's what you're going to do or your goals or however you want to call it that. But the people that you're going to work with to accomplish whatever this thing over here is, you've got to figure out how you're going to work together. So that's why the operating principles and the who we are and what we're going to do. Because your project is one thing. And the relationships that are going to lead to the success of your project are a different thing.

Often what we do, I know when I worked in government, we would just start with our project. And, of course, everybody had to be on that committee. And then you move ahead with it. But it would break down because we hadn't done the work with those individuals or representatives of

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organizations. That's what this part of it is about, figuring out how we're going to work together in community, is the best way to describe it.

So you don't have to change your proposal. You don't have to change your mission or your project or what you're getting funded for. But you probably will find it's more successful if you spend a little time working with whoever these people are that you've said you're going to work with in your grant.

The easiest thing in the world is to write a letter of support, right? But the hardest thing in the world is to make good on that letter of support. And that's what this kind of work is, that somebody has to exercise leadership with the participants in your collaboration partnership, relationship, coalition, whatever it is, and make sure that we all agree that this is how we're going to work together.

And if you do it on the front end and get rid of the hidden agendas and talk about the biases and all that, on the back end you won't be as frustrated about the problems you'll encounter because you'll work out a lot of them early on. Do you have a lot of turnover in State government?

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Q: Yes, because people are getting laid off in droves.

MS. MILLER: So this may have to be an ongoing process. It's not like you can do it once and it sticks. Because new people will be in those roles.

Q: Or someone who already is working fulltime will have to pick up the pieces of the position that was eliminated.

MS. MILLER: Yes, and that's hard to layer this on top of it. But if you don't take the time to do it, that person is really going to tear her hair out or his hair out. If there are questions, let's do them now. And then Erica has some handouts for you. Because we have to toot D.C. Campaign's horn. Any questions?

Q: I have a question for the interested D.C. resident. I read the thing that you're going to hand out. I saw your handouts already. But the editorial that was in the *Washington Post* a couple of weeks ago, did you work with them on that? And how did you get that in the *Post* in the editorial section?

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MS. MILLER: We have been blogging about the District's projected budget deficit and talking about the fact that TANF and child welfare were big ticket items in the budget. And so somebody read the blog.

Q: I have a question for you. Would you be interested in writing an Op-Ed for the commercial appeal in the Memphis Sunday paper next Sunday?

MS. MILLER: I don't know a thing about Memphis. I've been there but -

Q: Maybe from a national perspective.

MS. MILLER: But see I only work in the District. The National Campaign has a national perspective.

Q: That's what I mean. I guess I'm speaking to the Co-Chair.

MS. MILLER: I appreciate the compliment.

Q: Teen pregnancy perpetuates child poverty, perpetuates poverty in the national scope.

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MS. MILLER: I'd be happy to share our blog with you if you'd like to look at it.

Q: Okay.

MS. MILLER: Well, you know, the week before he had written about what the new mayor should be looking at. And because the whole Op-Ed, the first one, was about the budget deficit and how you couldn't balance the budget on the backs of children and poor people. The blog was just fortuitous. I'd like to take credit for having done all this legwork, but I think it was serendipity.

Q: But I think it also speaks to the fact that you've been talking about these issues in D.C.

MS. MILLER: Over and over and over and over.

Q: With a variety of different lenses. And this is the lens that is going to appeal to a lot of people that maybe other lenses wouldn't at the time. This budget crisis is going to speak to a different group of people. Everyone wants healthy youth. But sometimes people are just like, oh. That's not the sort of immediate target.

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MS. MILLER: The shocking thing that we keep stressing whenever we're talking to other people is that child poverty had been decreasing around the country, but increasing in the District. And one in three children in most parts of the city are poor, but in some wards it's one in two. And this is the capital of the greatest nation in the history of the world. That's unacceptable.

Okay, I have five minutes, any more questions? I didn't tell you about my favorite partnership in the whole wide world, but if you want to e-mail me I'll tell you more about it. It was better than the rural farm network.

Q: Well, at least give us the name of it now.

MS. MILLER: It was in the early '90s. I was working at Planned Parenthood and a friend of mine was doing PR for a city council member in Ward A, which is the poorest ward in the city. And the pastor of her church was really concerned that women in his community weren't getting access to health care. So we went to Region 3 and they said they would fund a family planning clinic if we could find space for it.

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So the pastor of the church gave us space. So it was the only family planning clinic in an African Methodist Episcopal church in the country. I loved it because all the pieces came [together]. It was like the stars were aligned. And when we dedicated it, it was called the "Wishing Well Clinic." When we dedicated it, there was actually a liturgy and we had a parade.

It proved to me that even if people say you can't do it, there's always a way to figure it out and you probably can do it. But I can tell you more about that. I think that churches are an often overlooked partner. But it has to work for them. And it has to be something that they can get behind and be true to whatever the tenants of their faith are.

Thank you. Thank you so much. I really appreciate everything that you shared with me. And I hope that if you have questions or if there's anything I can do to help. I mean I'd love to write for the *Commercial Appeal*. But I just don't ... you'd have to give me a real crash course.

Q: Well, I've got your email.

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(END OF TRANSCRIPT)