**Building Resilient, Self-Healing Communities**

An exciting and somewhat logical outgrowth that has followed the Resilience documentary screenings sponsored by the Potts Family Foundation has been the creation of multidisciplinary teams formed to think about and take next steps within their communities. Led by Resilient Payne County, formed over two years ago, other communities are following a similar path in bringing key leaders together to assess their community’s strengths and define community needs around mitigating and preventing the all-too-frequently devastating consequences of childhood trauma and toxic stress.

Nationally, the State of Washington has been THE leader in this area making remarkable improvements in the statistics around youth arrests for violent crime, teen suicide, domestic violence, teen arrests for drugs, and births to teen mothers and more. As depicted in the documentary *Resilience: The Biology of Stress & the Science of Hope*, it was estimated that the State of Washington saved over 1.4 billion dollars over a 10 year period by deploying the “self-healing communities” model developed by Washington native Laura Porter.

Two weeks ago, PFF along with the Center for Integrative Research on Childhood Adversity and 10 other funders brought Laura Porter to Oklahoma City and invited 21 of our emerging communities, listed below, to participate in this model. Nearly 60 key leaders went through a half-day leadership training prior to being joined by the full teams of 5-8 members (multi-disciplinary in makeup) who came the next day for a full day of training. The communities with teams represented included Ada/Chickasaw Nation, Ardmore, Bartlesville, Claremore, Canadian County, Duncan/Stephens County, Enid, Guthrie/Logan County, Lawton/Ft. Sill, McAlester/Pittsburg County, Mid-Del Public Schools, NE OKC, Noble, Norman, Oklahoma City Public Schools, Putnam City Public Schools, Shawnee/Pott County, Stillwater/Resilient Payne County, Tulsa and Woodward. The statewide Trauma Task Force also made up a team.

Teams were led through the NEAR (Neuroscience, Epigenetics, ACEs, Resilience) science, Executive Function Skills and the 6 Principles of Self-Healing Communities – Inclusive Leadership, Iterative Cycles of Learning, Emergent Capabilities, NEAR-Informed Engagement, Right-Fit Solutions and Hope and Efficacy. Through a mix of stories from her own experiences in Washington and several group exercises, the 180 participants were challenged to think both creatively and boldly.

Team members from the 21 communities spent time within their individual disciplines discussing best practices, what was right about the work they were doing and what actions they could take immediately to interrupt the progression of adversity. The teams then regrouped in their communities and discussed what actions, if taken, would invite a profound shift in norms and prevent the accumulation of ACEs in the next generation.

The workshop was an overwhelming success as teams left somewhat exhausted by the amount of information packed into the day but feeling energized and empowered to return to their communities and build on this learning. They also left knowing that they were now a part of a statewide network with like goals willing and eager to share successes. Little did we know when we started this “Resilience journey” two years ago that we would be here today – from Raising Resilient Oklahomans to building resilient, self-healing communities.