

**SWK 556 Generalist Practice II: SWK Practice with Groups, Orgs., and Communities
Spring 2022**

Non-Profit Organizational Mini-Assessment and Reflections

Name: FORESTDALE, INC.

Legal Basis:

Forestdale is a non-profit organization recognized by the law to legitimately operate under (501c. Each year Forestdale completes its Form 990, which is an annual tax return that federally tax-exempt organizations must file with the United States Internal Revenue Service.

Mission:

Forestdale is the only child welfare in Queens with a mission to serve as a resource for all families in the borough ensuring the well-being of abused and neglected children through foster care and adoption services. Forestdale partners with schools, religious organizations, business owners, and community leaders to address the underlying causes of families in crisis.

By Laws:

Forestdale's by laws describes the structure and abilities of the board of directors, composition of the board, terms of the members, permanent committees, voting rights, and other matters of governance.

History:

Forestdale's history was rooted back is 1854 – a group of local women founded the Brooklyn Industrial School Association and Home for Destitute Children to teach poor children basic trade skills. By 1880, the organization ran five separate school in Brooklyn Heights, Williamsburg and “Jackson Hallow,” near today's Bedford-Stuyvesant. In late 19th century, shifting immigration patterns and emergence of public school system led to the closing of the

Industrial Schools. The organization changed its name to Brooklyn Home for Children, and focused exclusively on providing residential care for abused and/or abandoned youth.

In 1941, the Brooklyn Home for Children bequeathed a parcel of land in Forest Hills, Queens to construct a five-building residential campus. That same year, the agency launched its foster boarding home program. As community-based foster homes became the norm during second half of 20th century, more orphanages closed their doors. In 1980, the agency retired its residential program to focus on foster and adoption. Eight years later, it officially changed its name to Forestdale, Inc.

In 2020, Forestdale was granted a multi-million-dollar contract to administer services throughout Brooklyn and set up offices about half a mile from its site of origin in Brooklyn Heights. Currently, Forestdale operates out of three offices of Brooklyn and Queens. Despite the challenges of opening new offices during COVID-19 pandemic, Forestdale met the challenge and provide innovative services in its new location. Forestdale's history can attest to its mission to ensure children and families have resources to thrive, transform, continue to grow and strive for a more equitable future that are available for New Yorkers.

Administrative, Structure, and Management Style:

Forestdale's organizational chart depicts relationships to one another that can be seen in the way work is allocated, decisions are made, employee supervised and conflict is handled. Forestdale's 200+ employees, 3000 clients, are managed and headed by seven Executive Officers, a number of Executive Directors, Assistant Executive Directors, Program Administrations, Supervisors, and quite number of Board of Directors.

Structure of Programs, Services, and Activities:

Forestdale's programs are anchored to building and protecting children which contributes for building a strong family. **Preventive Services programs** have played a central role in this transition, keeping families together and stabilizing setting for future success. Case planners meet with families in their communities, become partners, conducts assessment, develops plan based from family's needs. Case planner address common road-blocks such poverty, mental health, addiction, or oppression, as barriers for growth. Preventive staff becomes a resource in housing, employment, education and training, and for clinical services for both children and parents. With 98% of families able to stay together, Preventive Services have been a successful program for Forestdale. With about 580 individuals and families served each year, families typically receive one year of service under Forestdale's Preventive Program.

NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) awarded Forestdale a significant expansion for Preventive Services to serve the entire boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens with three program models: **Solution-Based Casework:** an evidence-informed model, goal-oriented with proven results. The **Family Treatment & Rehabilitation** is a program for families struggling with mental health or substance use, and the **Trauma Systems Therapy:** to helps heal children & families from trauma.

Forestdale's fathering initiative, the **Strong father's program** has a 95% graduation rate and in 2018 approximately 200 fathers (non-custodial) participated in the program. **Strong mothers' program** is for young women, aged 12-24, gain support to realize their leadership potential and gain support in topics such as teenage pregnancy and detection of transmitted infections are part of this program. A **Window to Healing program** was launched in 2019 to support children and caregivers who have witnessed domestic violence, and in abusive

relationships. **Infant Mortality Reduction Initiative program**, a weekly workshop for Queens women about reproductive health care, family planning, sexually transmitted infections, HIV, Mental Health Wellness; differentiate between Healthy vs. Unhealthy.

Strong Minds, Strong Bodies program in partnership with New York University's Colleges of Nursing and Dentistry, provides free medical and dental care for families.

A move to integrated health approach, **Children's Health Homes a program** is to deliver health care support services for children's well-being. **New State Licensure Designation** – Forestdale has received 29-I Health Facilities licensure for voluntary Foster Care Agencies to provide specialized medical services to youth in foster care, including mental health, nursing, social skill development, community-based psychiatry, life coaching, and substance abuse counseling.

Attachment and Bio-behavioral Catch-up (ABC) program is for infants and toddlers in the child welfare system to those in foster care. Forestdale was the first organization in NYC to implement ABC, an evidenced-based intervention, lauded by the City Administration for Children Services (ACS), in which trained therapists use coaching and video feedback to encourage a stronger parent-baby bond. Secure attachment has been linked to better behavior in school, better relationships in life, attitudes to work, and adult global functioning.

Trauma Systems Therapy (TST) program beyond child welfare's safety helps young people to excel in education, careers and interpersonal relationships. Partnering with NYU Child Study Center, TST is to effectively treat trauma that can delay or deter continued development as children mature. Nearly every child involves in welfare experiences trauma- physical, sexual or emotion abuse to witnessing dysfunction and violence within the homes and communities.

Forestdale's Foster Care Services have worked with 600 children aged 0-21 during the fiscal year of 2019. The program provided safe and nurturing homes for youth to achieve their

personal, academic and professional goals. Forestdale's foster care ultimate aim is to return children to their homes as soon as it is safe. To attain the goal, Forestdale is implementing solution-based casework (SBC) program and partnering with families to identify destructive patterns in exchange for safe family lifestyles.

Forestdale's Strong Future Program is for youth aging out foster care who needs love, resources and reassurance. With 50% end up homeless or in jail within 3 years, 66% young women in foster care will give birth between their 18th and 22nd birthdays. With no college degree, earns less than \$14,000 per year, life outcomes for children leaving foster care have to improve. **Forestdale scholars (FS) program** provides academic support for youth in foster care (grades 3-12+) to ensure high school and college graduations, a pathway to a successful life.

Strong Futures Internships program transitioning foster youth into workforce, with paid internships in information technology, administrative services, childcare, peer health education, culinary arts, automotive work, and maintenance. With 85% completion of 92 youth from 2016-2018. **Life Coaching program** for young people ages 11-24 who have exited or in the process of exiting foster care, who needs one-on-one guidance to improve skills into adulthood. Connecting teens and young adults to positive influences, diverting from negative ones. Design a realistic plan, short and long-term with trained coaches.

Organizational Culture:

A group norm values that is observable at Forestdale is geared toward working together as evidenced by a twice a week multidisciplinary meeting. With the presence sometimes of the CEO and regular attendance of Executive Director, Program Director and a Licensed Social Workers together with several specialists, the values being espoused is to provide excellence and high-quality practice in all services. Carrying the philosophy that covers almost every step to

protect, provide, and guide children particularly those in foster care, abused and neglected children. Forestdale's offices provide a layout and a climate that is conducive for productive, meaningful interactions with clients and co-workers. Shared meanings within the employees centered on serving every child and families with utmost respect and provide best services at all times. Forestdale celebrates important events that reflects its values and cultures every year. Forestdale provides a culture that foster long-term engagement with the employees by providing benefits and pay and benefits which commensurate with abilities and responsibilities. Forestdale offers flexible time and work locations. One culture that is noticeable with Forestdale is the modeling of humility and respect by the top executives and or the CEO. This usually happens by visiting the sites to engage staff into a brief, but meaningful conversations many times during the year.

Physical Surroundings:

Forestdale's main site is located on a three-and-a-half acres campus in Forest Hills. It includes a basketball court and a JetBlue playground where families and children connect in a fun and peaceful setting. The offices at Forest Hills are in five residential buildings where most of the top management officers are situated. The Jamaica's office is in a newly constructed building in a residential area, close to community and clients where services are being offered. It is a safe, clean building, with organized reception, bright and well-lit lobby and offices, providing spaces to each employee as precautions for COVID-19. The offices at the Brooklyn area offers the same amenities. Quite ambience with good privacy for interactions, provisions for good ventilations, heat and or air conditioners are available.

Public Relations:

Forestdale utilizes variety of mediums to manage their public information and image such as websites, social media, printed materials, public service announcements and face-to-face encounters.

Language:

Forestdale's language, tone, range of sentiment, and degree of empathy and respect can be observed in each meeting and or interactions among officers and employees. Modeled by the CEO, Mr. William Weinsberg, who possesses a tone that reflects humbleness and respect to each person, pleasantness appears to become a norm with all employees at Forestdale.

Procedures:

With employees' handbook and a required orientation, social worker reflects the expression of respect to the clients including greetings, answering telephones and or emails, inviting client to office from the waiting room or giving them paperwork. Most importantly, safety precautions for both client and workers are being observed at all times in all places of work places particularly during the crisis of pandemic. Necessarily, PPE are available in all locations, with a consistent, clear instructions from the management. To avoid overcrowdings, work days are adjusted between working at home and reporting to the offices. Transportation expenses are reimbursed to those staff who are at risk using public transportations.

Social Justice/Diversity Factors:

Forestdale not only promote social justice in every program, but in internal administrative practices which reflects diversity, cultural competence/humility, and social justice. In fact, Forestdale integrates and celebrates cultural values, such as in food events which reflects ethnic food traditions and restrictions. Materials are available in multiple languages and messages which conveys inclusivity. As a strong advocate for diversity, Forestdale in presently hiring a

Race, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Specialist to further its commitment to race, equity, and an environment that values diversity, promotes an inclusive culture and provides equitable services.

Resources:

Forestdale published each annual financial resources in completing a yearly Form 990 for federally tax purposes. Independent Auditor's Report, Annual budget and additional resources during the year is published in annual review bulletin. Technical resources are available all throughout the 3 offices of Forestdale that includes strong internet connections, provisions for laptops and computers, ample amount of office spaces, adequate software, cell phones and continues hiring skilled, knowledgeable and experts to serve the clients and families registered in the system.

Relationship with Funders and Potential Funders:

Forestdale's Audited Statement of Operating Income ending June 30, 2019 indicated that the sources of income are from: Foster boarding homes, Medicaid, Preventive Services, Child Success NYC, Forestdale fathering initiative, Contributions and grants, Infant mortality rates' reduction, Special event revenue, and Investment returns. The summary appears that Forestdale's operating expenses June 2019 is 80% of the total net assets. Although the net gain was not half or more than the overall organization's total expenses in 2019 to be considered to have strong relationships with its funder, I believe Forestdale is still in a sound financial standing as a non-profit organization at this time.

Forestdale's funders and supporters include: Algin Management, Apollojets, Berdon Cares, Bob's Cares, CAI, Cigna, CRE Community Resource Exchange, Corning, Wendy's Wonderful Kids, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Deutsche Bank, The Edith Glick Schoolman Children's Foundation, Fair Futures, First Presbyterian Church of Forest Hills,

FPWA Fulfilling the promise of opportunity, The Frances L. & Edwin L. Cummings Memorial Fund , Freshdirect, Fulton street Software, Fund for the City of New York, Public health of NY, Good Help Us Breath the Cycle of Poverty, investor Foundation, The Hyde ad Watson Foundation, The Janey Fund, Jaye Penny Gould Foundation, jetBlue, J.P. Morgan Asset Management, LinMar, Lions, The Marion E Kenworthy Sarah H. Swift Foundation, March Mertz Foundation, the Nancy and Edwin Marks Family Foundation, NYC Children, The New York City Council, NYC Huan Resources Administration, NYC Department of Youth & Community Development, NYC Health, Public Health Solutions, The Pinkerton Foundation, NYU, New York Office of Mental Health, NYS Office of Children and Family Services, DOH New York State Department of Health, Mets, One Group, Restoration Medical Supplies, RobinHood, Rosin Steinhagen Mendel, Give Steven & Alexandra Cohen Foundation, Seyfarth Shaw, Sydney Paige, Silverstein Properties, Charitable Foundation TD, tydas, vframework, Washington Square Fund, West Side Tennis Club Forest Hills, Weyerhaeuser Family Foundation, Women’s Club of Forest Hills, and Zim plumbing.

SUMMARIES AND REFLECTIONS:

Forestdale’s Mini-Assessment was done by utilizing its internal and external published information from its websites which was gathered without difficulty. The published information becomes my main source of information. However, another source was by a random interview with some supervisors in my department, who confirmed and attested to what the websites are trying to convey to the readers. Furthermore, another source was by being in the multidisciplinary meetings myself many times, including attendance with some events and gatherings sponsored by Forestdale. Since Forestdale carefully laid out every detail of its operations in a systematic transparent manner through its websites, I am pleased to report that the

effort used with information gathering was minimal. The consistency of information to what has been written and or published in the websites was confirmed and observed in many of my interactions with officers, supervisors, co-workers and clients in everyday work day event.

In my opinion, the top strength of Forestdale is its commitment to diversity. This is evident by multiple, integrated programs being offered to some of its three locations in the boroughs of Queens, Jamaica and Brooklyn. This commitment to diversity is reflected by its many programs which are backed by evidence-informed practices such as in the SBC, TST and FTR. The Foster Care Services, which has been going-on for many years now, becomes a pillar of Forestdale services is another evidence for inclusivity. The integrations of many services for foster care children including educational assistance to the aged-out children or about to aged-out, providing work training, coaching, health and integrated well-being is another form of strength for Forestdale.

For possible growth, I believe the area to focus is in the expansion of services to poor children of the community that are not enrolled in the system either in Preventive Programs or Foster Care Programs. My recommendation is to continue to work with the City of New York and many funders, borough officers to receive more fundings that could be utilized for this expansion program. To engage the agency in this change process, I would submit a proposal, after a thorough research using survey questionnaire, websites and interviews, collaborating with schools, churches, and other community leaders to gather information on vulnerable children in the community. A borough must be sub-divided in small working area for full coverage.

Another growth is in the area of servicing those with substance use disorders. In my opinion, due to limited number of service providers in the area, clients are having difficulty receiving timely services they needed to become well. My recommendation is that Forestdale

will integrate a program for substance use counseling and treatment, to expand its present services of screening and assessment only. To engage Forestdale in the change process, my plan is to submit a proposal that will integrate screening, assessment, treatment and rehabilitation in the program for **Family Treatment and Rehabilitation (FTR)**. My experience taught me that timing is crucial in treatment process, knowing unpredictability and reluctant attitude towards treatment by our substance user clients. Considering the legalization for recreational marijuana use in many states, including New York, the gap between the initial screening and assessment to referring them to outside agencies caused a huge barrier to receive necessary treatment. Along the way, many changed their minds, complaint of not being treated well by other agencies, becomes reluctant to receive or continue the agreed treatment. Time frame to implement is about one year. Source of funding could be from SAMSHA, NIDA, DOH Office of Mental Health, City of New York, NYC Human Resources Administration, Borough City officers, other funders, private businesses and community members.

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