



## Equity Spotlight Podcast Series

### The Future of Desegregation in St. Louis, Missouri: Lessons Learned from the Voluntary Inter-District Desegregation Program

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**Center Announcer:** Welcome to the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center Equity Spotlight Podcast Series. This podcast series will feature the Center's Equity Fellows, national scholars from North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio who are working to advance equitable practices within school systems.

Each episode will focus on a topic relevant to ensuring equitable access and participation and quality education for historically marginalized students specifically in the areas of race, sex, national origin, and religion, and at the intersection of socioeconomic status.

**Dr. Sarah Diem:** My name is Sarah Diem and I am an Equity Fellow for the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center and an Associate Professor at the University of Missouri. I am your host for the podcast, *The Future of School Desegregation in St. Louis, MO: Lessons Learned from the Voluntary Inter-District Desegregation Program*.

Today we will be discussing the history and future of school desegregation in the St. Louis metropolitan area with David Glaser. David has served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Voluntary Inter-district Choice Corporation, also known as VICC, since November 2009. From 1996 to 2009, he served as the Chief Financial and Legislative Affairs Officer and Treasurer of the Rockwood School District, Missouri's fourth largest district. At Rockwood, he oversaw a total budget of over \$275 million, an operating budget of over \$200 million and payroll for approximately 4,500 employees. Previously David was the Associate Superintendent of Finance at Francis Howell School District, worked in private industry as a Vice President at Citicorp and Manager at Price Waterhouse. David is a Certified Public Accountant and received an MBA from the University of Missouri, graduating summa cum laude.

Welcome, David.

**David Glaser:** Thanks, Sarah.

**Dr. Sarah Diem:** David, can you tell us how you came to be involved with the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation and provide us with a brief history of program?

**David Glaser:** Sure. Well about seven years ago I was approached with this opportunity and you know one of my things that I have always had a lot interest in is having a little broader exposure in the

education field. So, you know, previously my focus was mainly in the financial area but after working in education for close to 20 years, I was ready to take a step into doing something a little bit different. And so this, as I share with people, being the chief financial officer or being the chief executive officer of VICC is quite a bit different than being the chief financial officer Rockwood. This has given me the opportunity to work a lot more with principals and superintendents and parents and so it's been a very good challenge and something that I really enjoy doing.

A relatively brief history of the program, actually, the program sort of was initiated, if you will, in 1972 when known a group of five black North St. Louis parents led by Minnie Liddell filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court related to the quality of education that they were being offered in the city of St. Louis. That progressed through the court system for a long period of time and finally in 1981, Judge Hungate proposed a regional voluntary desegregation plan and asked for responses from 39 school districts. So, he basically expanded it from exclusively the city of St. Louis to include the city of St. Louis and St. Louis County. And then in '82 he said, hey if you guys don't to come together then I'm going to come up with one district that's going to include all of the city and the county and so ultimately in 1983, an agreement on a voluntary plan was announced and was endorsed by 20 of the 23 county school districts. And by March of that same year, a final settlement plan was approved and given to Judge Hungate and then he approved us moving forward at that point in time. So the program basically continued under federal court jurisdiction from 1983 until 1999, and then in 1999 the program kind of changed a little bit and with approval of a two thirds of a cent sales tax increase by St. Louis city voters and a court approval of a new, or updated, 1999 settlement agreement on March 15<sup>th</sup>, the old name, the Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council, was transformed into the Voluntary Interdistrict Choice Corporation – interestingly enough still the same four letters for the acronym VICC. And so we been proceeding from since 1999. So the program at that point in time was sort of envisioned to continue for 10 years from '99 to 2009 because there were some concerns that a race-based school integration program couldn't continue in perpetuity. And so our enrolment basically peaked at that point time in '99 and so because everyone understood that the program was going to be gradually phased out, all of the districts were kind of gradually reducing their enrollment over time.

In 2007, actually before I began working here, all of the districts unanimously approved a five-year extension, so that took us from '99 to 2009 plus 5 years so now we're to 2013-14. I came on board in 2009 and started immediately having some conversations in terms of possible future extensions. Since that time we've approved two additional extensions of the program. The last one, or the next one, was I guess in 2012 and we extended taking new kids through 2018-19 so that's kind of the process that we've been in. So basically through this 5-year period, I'm estimating we're going to probably take about 2,500 new students into the program and then most recently we approved what we've called basically a final extension of the program, so our attorney is only comfortable that we can continue this for a limited amount of time, but he was comfortable with a total of 25 years so that takes out to now 2023-24. And so the last five-year extension, our emphasis is going to be upon bringing siblings into the program because obviously we feel like keeping families together is our highest priority. And then, even beyond '23-24 all of the kids that are in the program once they're in, if a new child comes into the program as a kindergartner in 2023-24, in theory, he/she would be able to participate in the program until they graduate from high school in 2036. So, someone did the math and figured out, you know our program before it finally ends will have operated for close to 50 years, over 50 years, so that makes us

probably one of the longest operating school desegregation programs in the nation. I'm not sure that was a brief history but anyway it's a history.

**Sarah:** No, that was great. And just a few other questions about the program itself, how many districts participate in the program? And how's that changed over time and what's the process for student enrollment? How are school districts deciding on how many spaces are available for incoming students and is there a waiting list?

**David:** Yeah, well, right now we have 13 districts participating in the city to county portion of the program so there are 13 districts in the county that still have students enrolled from the city. And then, there's also a county to city aspect, so it really was always envisioned to be a two-pronged program – one the opportunity for African American kids from the city to attend county districts and then also the opportunity for non-African American students in the county to attend schools in the city and so there is 15 districts in the county that are also sending kids to magnet schools in the city. In both cases, the purpose was to address long-standing harm, damages that were done to African American kids in the city and to increase the amount of integration overall. The process for, I guess one of the things that I would mention that I failed to mention in '99, one of the other things that the organization did was we initially divided the city into four attendance zones. Now as the program has shrunk a little bit, we're now down to three attendance zones.

So, the idea is depending upon where you live in the city that affects which districts in the county you're eligible to attend. And the purpose of that was at least twofold. One was to make the transportation process as effective and efficient as we could from a cost perspective. And then the other aspect probably even more important was to minimize the ride time for the kids so that, they're traveling a fair distance anyway coming from the city out to the various participating county districts so anything that we can do to make those ride times as short as possible, that was another aspect of that. In terms of the process for enrollment, the county districts basically provide VICC with the number of eligible spaces so they look at their resident enrollment and where they have space available within their schools and so then they will say okay I have space for this many kindergarten students, first grade, second grade, etc. And then in the case of three of our larger districts – Rockwood, Parkway, and Melville – they actually encompass multiple zones in the city so they'll give me available spaces not only by grade level but also by zone and so that affects which schools within their district they will attend. So that's kind of the initial thing, is okay here's how many spaces we have, then we send a letter out to all parents in the city, public information is on our website, we send a letter to people that have applied in previous years and didn't get in because of lack of space, and we send a letter out to all siblings. So, siblings and students that didn't get in that applied in the prior year, basically are first in line so they have an opportunity to apply generally in November and December.

And then we start taking general applications in January and then we take applications from January through June. Historically, we've received in the neighborhood of 3,000+ applicants the last three or four years and we typically have somewhere between four and 600 available spaces. So, what I hear from folks is that we generally have 6 to 7 times as many students applying as we have available spaces. How we decide who gets selected? First priority is to siblings, that's per the terms of our settlement agreement, and I think obviously the right thing to do. We want to keep families together like I mentioned earlier, so siblings get first priority. Second priority would be to students that applied in previous years and didn't get in. And then third priority is simply based upon you know, we date stamp

every application that comes in and so if you apply on January 6<sup>th</sup> you know you're ahead of somebody that applied on January 7<sup>th</sup> who's ahead of somebody February or March. The next step is, once we determine that there is a space for a student that has applied, then we will send a request to their home school for a current report card and we also send what's called behavior information form.

So, we don't select or de-select students based upon grade but we do take into consideration any behavioral issues. So, if a student has a history of being disruptive in the classroom, being expelled for fighting, weapon charges against them they're pretty much going to be not approved to come in the program. We look at two years worth of behavior history because, really, we have many, many more students applying than we have available spaces, so as much as possible we want to make sure that students that have an opportunity to participate in the program are most likely to be successful. They already, I think, have a little bit of a heads up because generally, you have a more involved parent that's looking at additional opportunities for their students so many of these students have parents that are strongly advocating for their kids and wanting their kids to have an opportunity to participate in the program. The hardest thing for me is that, you know, the conversation with the parent that's been applying for a couple of years and hasn't gotten in and just, you know, wanting to know what I can do, and in many cases there's not much I can do, there's not a space available for this child, it's heartbreaking, but I have to give everyone an equal opportunity and follow the rules that are in place. So, that's kind of where we are at in that regard. So, I guess I tell people it's a good problem to have, there is so much interest in our program, you know, that the demand greatly exceeds the available supply of spaces. So that's, I guess, a blessing and a curse, you know, it's great that families want to participate and it's disappointing that we can't allow, just that there is not enough space as many kids that want to participate to be able to do so.

**Sarah:** So, that kind of ties into my next question about the community's perception of VICC. It sounds like many people want to be a part of VICC so, you know, beyond the positive aspects are there any concerns about the program or how would you describe the community's perception?

**David:** I would say, I guess there's multiple communities that we could talk about. One would be you know, the county districts. So, when the program, I mean, I remember because I was at Rockwood at the time when the program first began, there was probably some concern among county parents about all you know, how is this going to affect my child's education and there's all these kids coming being bused out to our districts. And I would say that there were some of those concerns for some period of time and thankfully, I would say you know, we've definitely moved beyond that. The program's been around for such a long period of time, I think the community's perception is pretty much this is just how we do things. And even to some extent, I'm seeing this more and more, and I've really tried to make this a key message as well is that, this program is a win-win situation. It's for kids from the city, and I'm focusing on that because that's where the great majority of our kids are, kids from the city coming out to the county districts, for kids from the city who want an option and who are willing to make the commitment, and it's a big commitment because you know, they have to get up earlier, ride the bus for a longer period of time. For, the kids and their families are willing to make this commitment it really does provide a good opportunity for them.

I think just as importantly, I try to emphasize that for kids in the county it's a benefit to them as well because as a society we're becoming more and more diverse. There's lots of statistics on that and I think it was in 2012, was the first time that the majority of new children born in the United States were

not white, and then and in I believe it was in 2015-16 the first time the majority of new kids enrolling in public schools were not white. So, as a country we're becoming much more diverse and so therefore there's all kinds of research, educationally and from a business perspective on how it's beneficial for a non-African American child to be educated in a more diverse environment. And so I think that's, everyone gets that, and so in a few cases when some county districts have even considered pulling out of the program, there was a lot of pushback from the residents saying no, this is a good program, we want our kids to be educated in a more diverse environment and what in the heck are you thinking? From the city side, I think the city families see it as obviously a good thing because the number of applicants is so much more than the number spaces we have. I guess, I'm a little surprised I haven't really heard much pushback. We've tried to communicate multiple times in multiple ways that this last extension is the final extension of the program and it goes through 2023-24. And maybe, 2023-24 is just so far away that everyone's just kind of thinking well this doesn't really affect me. And part of the reason why we want to do that five years was, so that families would in essence, know if you have a baby at home and that child is a three-month-old and your older child is already in the program, this baby that you have at home will also be able to participate because we're going to give first priority siblings and we've allocated to make sure that there is going to be enough spaces for all siblings. So maybe that's why I haven't really heard a lot of pushback. I think the other thing that's maybe contributing to that, we are seeing a slight tapering off of the number of applications this year versus last year and still, it will still be 2,500 maybe instead of 3,000. But I think the other thing that may be contributing to that is Dr. Kelvin R. Adams, who's the superintendent of St. Louis, he's been there for, I think eight years now so they've had a lot of continuity of leadership which the city hadn't had previously. So I think that's been a very positive thing. Kelvin has done great job of providing additional opportunities for kids in the city, expanding gifted programs, expanding high school options, and improving the overall operation of the city in terms of going from unaccredited to provisionally accredited to now they are fully accredited. They've improved their attendance, they've improved their test scores, they've improved their physical management and so I think families are maybe starting to see attending a city school as a reasonably good option as well and the benefit of that is obviously the school is right there in the neighborhood and right there in the community. But the other side of it is too, we have a lot of, I mean since the program's been around for quite a while, we have a lot of parents that actually participated in the program personally. And then they saw the benefit for themselves and then, I guess not surprisingly they want their children to participate as well. So, we have many, I couldn't tell you for sure how many, but we have a lot of second-generation students and even a few third-generation students in the program, which is pretty I guess maybe a little bit unusual and also kind of exciting to see that happen.

**Sarah:** Yeah, and you mentioned that VICC isn't going to be accepting students into the program beginning in the 2023-24 school year and I just wonder how and why the decision wasn't made to discontinue the program given its popularity and these second and third generation families participating in the program?

**David:** Yeah, really I'm not an attorney so I have to rely on our legal counsel and Mark Bremer has been our legal counsel for the program since its inception and he's said that based upon various court decisions around the country, he's basically comfortable with the program going on for 25 years so from 1999 when the VICC organization was kind of reconstituted up to '23-24 that's 25 years. But, I guess there are some legal precedents, court cases, etc. that in essence say, that our race-based school

integration program is not allowed to continue in perpetuity. So, it has to have an end at some point in time. You get three or four attorneys in a room, they might come up with differing conclusions, some might say well 25 years is too long and others might say you could go more than 25 years, we just have to go with our legal counsel's advice and he's comfortable with 25 and so we've been talking about that really probably for some time. And so since a race-based program can't continue in perpetuity, we have talked about what could the program look like in the future. How could we, like you said, it's been a very positive thing for really, the whole St. Louis metropolitan area. So, how could we continue some of the benefits of the program into the future? And so one of the things that we've talked about, and my board of directors is comprised of the superintendents of the participating districts, so as a board we've been doing some strategic planning for a number of years related to all of this and one of the things that we've talked about is potentially transitioning the program at some point in time into more of a socioeconomic program.

So, you know, if the criteria was not based on race or was based upon socioeconomic factors, number one that would likely be permissible from a legal perspective and number two it would still help us achieve a lot of diversity from a race-based perspective as well. So, the key thing is, I guess from what I do understand from a legal point of view, is that you can't use race as any kind of a criteria, you can't have any minimum threshold for race but as long as you do it on socioeconomic basis and you end up getting some racial diversity as a result or as a consequence that's perfectly fine. We'll probably start really diving into that maybe in a year or two. We're not going wait until 2023-24 to decide how we're going to proceed in that regard. One thing that will be different, you know, all of our extensions legally have only required a weighted majority vote. It's kind of been irrelevant because all of our extensions have been approved unanimously anyway. But if we transition the program from race-based to socioeconomic-based, that's a significant enough of a change that it would mean that number one we would need a unanimous vote to be able to do that so all districts participating would need to vote unanimously. And then, potentially there are some districts in North St. Louis County that might want to also participate and so they'll be new districts so, you know, they have to voluntarily agree to say, hey, we would be interested, too, in participating in this and I guess the vision of what that might look like is, right now, St. Louis tends to be a little bit parochial.

You know, there's 23 different school districts in St. Louis County and all the districts tend to emphasize how good their students are doing, what a great district they have, and how well they are performing, and, you know, if you're from St. Louis, kind of the standard joke is like you probably don't get too far into the conversation with someone new that you haven't met that someone will ask where did you go to high school? My understanding is that kind of unique question in St. Louis metropolitan area that apparently that doesn't come up if you live in Atlanta but it does come up pretty frequently in St. Louis and as a lifelong resident of St. Louis and I can vouch that's probably the case. So, I think what we are really thinking is how can we better market this St. Louis metropolitan area if we could talk about not only how is District A performing versus District B but how is this St. Louis, no matter where, you know, if a business is looking at moving their corporate headquarters here, no matter where you locate that business, you know, all of our school districts are top-notch and you can be comfortable that your employees and their kids will get a great education no matter where they live. So, I think that could be a benefit and also a challenge because getting the St. Louis metropolitan area to think more regionally is not always easy.

**Sarah:** So, in terms of, if you are going to change to a socioeconomic-based plan it would just be the decision of your board, would have to go to the legislature? I'm thinking about how funding works for the program, can you talk a little bit about that?

**David:** Yeah, I think those are all really good questions and those are all questions that are kind of on our list that as, you know, when we move in that direction we would obviously want to sit down with, at the very least, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to make sure that the funding mechanism that's currently in place would still continue or continue in a fashion that's similar to how it is right now, maybe slightly different. Because right now, the students participating in the program is what drives the funding of our organization. So, most of our revenue comes through the state foundation formula. We get a little bit of money, Missouri has a Proposition C that was passed in 1982, a 1% of statewide sales tax that also is distributed to all districts on a per-pupil basis, and then we get some reimbursement for transportation costs by no means anywhere close to even half of those costs. So, how would that funding look in the future if the program was revised in different, and you know, would we have the support of Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and ultimately would we even need potentially some new legislation to give us that authority to continue as well. Those are all questions that would need to be considered and addressed but we are not to the point yet where we have gotten there. I guess, first we have to determine is this something that people want to participate in and then assuming that there some interest in moving forward then the next question is how would it work operationally and financially?

**Sarah:** So, given your experiences with VICC, how do you think we can build support for interdistrict desegregation programs across the country and do you even think this is the way we should move forward in order to achieve diverse schools?

**David:** Well there's probably I would say a number of things that are key. One is getting the local community on board and helping everybody see that it's beneficial for all students. It really is a win-win thing for kids to be educated in a more diverse environment. It's good for the minority students, but it's good for the kids that are not minority students as well. So that's kind of the first thing is I guess selling the local community that it is a win-win good opportunity for all. The next thing I would say is, the programs that I've seen around the country that kind of haven't been as successful in many cases they haven't had an adequate level of funding to make it happen. Right now, and really for the last many years, we've been right around \$7,000 per student in funding. So, in other words, every county district that takes a student from the city, VICC pays them \$7,000 to contribute towards the cost of educating that child. As an ex-financial kind of guy with expertise in that area, occasionally I have to get into these discussions with the school district or with their board about the whole average cost versus marginal cost because most of our county districts, you know, I'd say actually probably all of our county districts, their total fully loaded cost of education is more than \$7,000 a student. So, someone that's a little bit uninformed might say well, gosh, our cost of education is \$12,000 and you're only paying me seven so we are losing \$5,000 on every student. And I'll say that's really not true because a lot of, you know, when you say your cost is \$12,000 that includes a lot of overhead costs that whether you have a student from VICC or not those are not going to go away.

So, really the question is what is the incremental cost of educating the student? And since you have the opportunity as the county district to decide where you have available space for these kids, you know, if I

send you two kids and you put them in a second grade classroom that has 18 students in there and now there's 20 students in there, how much did your cost really go up? Probably not very much because all the school district administration is there, the school local administration is there, the custodial costs are there, your heating and cooling costs, the teachers are already there in the classroom. I'm going to pay you \$14,000 and your incremental costs are basically some books for these kids and supplies. So, the analogy that I use that people can usually relate to is the Southwest Airlines analogy. They have dynamic pricing and if they have a flight and they've got two empty seats, they want the plane full because the plane is already flying from St. Louis down to Orlando and the cost of putting two more passengers on there is pretty minimal but if they don't put anybody on there, they're not going to get anything. So, people can usually relate and connect to that analogy. The point is there has to be an adequate amount of funding for districts to see it as a beneficial thing for them from a financial perspective. I mean that's the third criteria, the most important is how does it benefit the kids from the city, how does it benefit kids locally, but financially it has to work, too, otherwise I've seen other programs that have lower levels of funding, sometimes they're not able to get the same level of participation.

And then, I think, the other thing that happens is that we do that is very important is we coordinate, oversee all of the transportation. So, school districts don't have to worry about that. We are responsible for doing all of the bus routes, taxi routes, however we transport those kids, you know, that's our job, that's our cost. We bear the cost of doing that and school districts don't have to worry about it. A long time ago, VICC had challenges with getting kids to school on time. I'm not going to say that never happens but it's much, much less of a concern and we typically, you know our transportation contractors, we do a survey every year and 80 to 90% of the principals that respond to that survey are either very satisfied or satisfied with the level of transportation. That's important, too, because a big part of any program like this, a lot of times it does involve transporting students and so if we can take care of that and the participating districts don't have to worry about it that's just one burden that's off their shoulders that they can just leave in our hands.

**Sarah:** So, what have been some of the major successes of VICC looking back to your time or even before you came to VICC?

**David:** I guess we can debate whether or not we are the biggest, longest, I know we are not the longest operating desegregation program in the country but we've done some research and so since the inception of the program through now over 70,000 students have participated in the program and over 60,000 of those were kids city to county and then over 10,000 were kids county to city. And we look at a lot of different things, we look at test scores, we look at attendance rates, we look at graduation rates, and we compare all those things to what their performance was in the city and the good news, and the bad news is, we have historically been much better in all of those objective type measures. I guess the other good news is that the city is improving and so the city is closing that gap and to me that's obviously a good thing and maybe the existence of our program has helped that to occur. The other thing I always emphasized though, you know, all of the statistics are not completely objective. Certainly we have a responsibility to look at attendance rates, graduation rates, and test scores and we do. And we provide reports to the board annually on how our test scores are compared to resident test scores, they can compare that to test scores in city and see that kids participating in our program are doing well. I think, in my opinion probably just as important, and maybe even more important, is all of the

anecdotal stories because we do six publications a year, we do apparently three times a year and we then we do a volunteer three times a year.

The Parent Link goes to the parents of our families participating in the program and then the volunteer goes to all of the school districts, administrators, teachers so they can see some of these, I guess I call them human interest stories in terms of how the program has changed lives and so we'll profile students that have participated in our program, they are now doctors, gone on to be superintendents of school districts, principals in school districts, teachers in school districts, airline pilots, I mean, the list goes on and on if you've got 70,000. I always tell people, let's be honest, were all 70,000 of those kids successful? No! But that's true in any circumstance. But we do have a lot of great stories of kids that have been extremely successful and even kids that maybe struggled in the program and maybe didn't even do that well academically, I mean, one particular student comes to mind basically dropped out of high school, didn't graduate from high school, ended up going to prison. And it took until, I think, late 20s early 30s before he got out of prison, went back, got his GED, started his own business and now, you know, operates a couple of different businesses, employs around 10 to 15 people. We actually talked to him, interviewed him and said what was the breakthrough? What happened? And he said, well it took me a while but at some point in time because I saw from the school district that I was in, a bunch of families that did have their own business or they were successful and I just said hey, I saw that as an example and if they could do this there's no reason that I couldn't do this as well. That's just an example. Sometimes everything that you want to measure is not on a piece of paper and is not a test score but it's just exposure to maybe a little different environment and seeing another culture and saying wow, if they can do this, I can do this.

That's one of the most enjoyable things about my job is seeing kids be successful. That's what we want do. There's challenges along the way. For many of these kids it's a big adjustment to come from the city and come out to a county district and have differing expectations. And so the other thing that we've historically had a counseling staff here at VICC to work with our students and their families and the role of our counselors is to do whatever it takes to help kids be successful. So, that could be if they are having disciplinary issues they are going to help with that, if there having just conflicts at school between someone at the school, conflict with the teacher, whatever, how can we help them be successful and ultimately graduate from the program. And our counselors just do a phenomenal job. We've got five folks that many of them have been here since the inception of the program and so they have a very good understanding of what it takes for our students to work through the challenges, whatever those might be, and, you know, and we're going to be their advocate to help them succeed.

**Sarah:** So, moving forward, as you begin to think about how VICC will be reimagined post 2023-2024, how do you think diversity should be defined and measured and I'm also interested in how VICC kind of operates in a much different educational landscape than when it first was created and implemented given charter schools and school choice?

**David:** Yeah, I mean, diversity in terms of how it's defined, it's kind of evolving I think as a nation, right? Because, like I alluded to earlier in our conversation, we're becoming much more diverse as a nation and so traditionally it's been more of a focus on race but now, I think we are looking at expanding that definition to include more than that. To include socioeconomic issues and things of that nature as well. I really hope that the program does continue in some shape or form beyond '23-24. I think that we've accomplished too much, we've come too far for it to just kind of come to an end and not continue in

some way. I think that at some point in time people will hopefully look back and say wow, St. Louis doesn't necessarily always have the reputation for being at the forefront of things of this nature. And I think our program is an example of a program that has worked really well and has kind of stood the test of time and been successful in most ways, however you would try and measure it. I think most people would say that it's been a good program. There were some bumps along the road at the very onset of the program, but now it's been around for quite a while and it works for kids, it works for families, and it works for the community.

**Sarah:** Great! Well thank you so much for your time, David, and your expertise. I really appreciate it.

**David:** Thanks, Sarah. Enjoyed talking to you.

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