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Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnership Through the Voices of the Children

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Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnership Through the Voices of the Children

by

Lynette M. Henry

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Curriculum and Instruction with a concentration in Counselor Education and Supervision Department of Psychological and Social Foundations College of Education University of South Florida

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June 26, 2014

Key Words: School Counseling, Resilience, Photovoice, Mentoring, Urban Education, School-community collaboration

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation first to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has taught me to love like He has loved me. This is His greatest commandment. Thank you God for loving me in spite of my many failures and instilling within me the faith to move mountains no matter what challenges are set before me.

I also dedicate my dissertation to my husband and children. My loving and committed husband Orland, thank you for your unconditional love and support. No matter what obstacle came my way you would say to me “you can do it Lyne”. Thank you Orland for believing in me and standing by my side in the up and down moments of this journey. Thank you for your patience. You are a wonderful and intelligent man and your affirmation of me are what pushed me through to the end. You are an incredible spouse and best friend. I dedicate my dissertation to my son Joseph who was such an encouragement and kept me focused. He would often say: “Mummy did you pray about it?” Thank you Joseph for being such an encourager, and oftentimes, a counselor for me. You helped me not quit when things got really tough. I am so proud of your heart to also love and serve in the inner city and with orphans. I dedicate my dissertation to my daughter Charisma who not only cheered me on, but inspired me as I watched her confidently and courageously handle her own challenges. I am always amazed to watch you give a speech or advocate for changes and I think how much we are alike. Thank you for always stepping in and helping me. I also dedicate my dissertation to my sister Julia who has been my greatest mentor and best friend. Your accomplishments inspired me, but your dedication and support are what helped me not only to choose this journey, but to actually complete it. Daddy always said, “you always follow your sister”. Thank you Mum, Dad and nanny Taylor for speaking that into my life. I am now a professor just like her. You are truly an amazing professor and mentor. Thank you Julia for never giving up on me and encouraging me to “Do it Scared”. Thank you for working with me to develop the model for building...
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"I cannot make children's hurts and fears and frustrations and disappointments go away.

Therefore, I will soften the blow." Garry Landreth
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Abstract

Faith-based school-family-community partnerships have been a federal mandate over the past decade, yet little has been written about the outcomes of these faith-based partnerships. A need exists to understand if the potential in these faith-based partnerships is indeed realized in positive outcomes for students and schools. The purpose of this study was to evaluate a faith-based school-family-community partnership, Just Love. Just Love is a faith-based school-family-community partnership between a large suburban church and a Title 1, urban elementary school, Charisma Elementary School (Charisma ES; pseudonym). It was implemented in what is considered a “failing school”. Just Love’s purpose was to have the volunteers from the church provide love, care, supportive adult relationships and service to the teachers, students, and parents of Charisma ES through a comprehensive, systemic program: Just Mentor (i.e., a school-based mentoring program), Just Connect (i.e., a classroom adoption program), and Just Rewards (i.e., a school wide student incentives/rewards and parent involvement program). The Bryan and Henry (2012) School-Family-Community Partnership Process Model was used in developing Just Love.

The Model for Collaborative Evaluations (MCE) (Rodriguez-Campos, 2005) was used in this evaluation to actively engage stakeholders during the evaluation process and to answer the evaluation questions (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2012). A mixed methods research design was used. Differences in student outcomes (i.e. academic, behavior and attendance) were examined between Charisma ES and another matching school without a faith-based school-family-community partnership were analyzed with descriptive statistics, paired T-tests, and mixed ANOVAs. Student outcomes were also investigated relevant to different aspects of the Just Love programs including adopted classrooms compared to non-adopted classrooms and mentored students compared to non-mentored students.
In addition, this study gave 20 children (i.e., mentees) who had experienced all aspects of the Just Love programs an opportunity to share their perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations regarding Just Love through the method of photo elicitation including picture selection and interviews (DeMarie, 2010; Harper, 2002). The transcribed data from the interviews and the pictures used in the photo-elicitation process were analyzed using thematic analysis with a focus on capturing the voices of the students.

Student outcome data were collected for three years from 2010-2013, with 2009 as a baseline year. The findings from the quantitative aspect of this study revealed that students in Charisma ES made significantly greater gains in reading than students in Joseph ES following the implementation of the partnership. Further, number of disciplinary referrals decreased dramatically at Charisma ES in contrast to Joseph ES whose disciplinary referrals increased. Attendance rates differed significantly between the two schools with students in Joseph Elementary School having higher attendance rates than students in Charisma Elementary School.

On average, both adopted and non-adopted classes made gains in reading in each of the three years although adopted classes appeared to have higher reading scores in 2011-2012 than non-adopted classes. The average number of disciplinary referrals per class was lower for adopted classes than for non-adopted classes in 2011-2012, one academic year after the Just Love partnership program was implemented. Concerning attendance, there were no significant differences in attendance rates between students in adopted and non-adopted classes at Charisma ES.

Mentored students at Charisma made significant improvements in reading. They also had a dramatically lower average number of disciplinary referrals than non-mentored students in 2012-2013, just two years after the Just Love partnership was implemented. When compared to non-mentored students, mentored students had significantly higher attendance than non-mentored students in 2011-2012, just one year after the Just Love partnership began. Further, attendance appeared to have a positive relation to the number of years students were mentored.
Findings from the qualitative aspect of this study were captured using thematic analysis of the children’s perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations concerning Just Love. The six categories that emerged from the data were (a) perceptions of Just Love, (b) positive feelings, (c) positive relationships and connectedness, (d) classroom and school climate, (e) experiences, and (f) support and resources. Each of these categories comprised a number of themes that aligned with identified protective factors and developmental assets necessary for the resiliency of and successful outcomes for children.

Taken together, the findings reveal that Just Love, a faith-based school-family-community partnership contributed to improved student outcomes in reading achievement, behavior and attendance and provided important protective factors and developmental assets for the children in Charisma ES. The Just Love partnership program presents a viable model for schools, school districts, and faith-based and community organizations that have a desire to foster resilience in children at-risk, generate positive academic, behavior, and attendance outcomes for children and decrease the chances of children growing up and developing risky behaviors. Implications for practice, training, evaluation, policy, and future research are discussed.
CHAPTER ONE:  
INTRODUCTION

"If poverty is a disease that affects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools and broken homes, then we can't just treat those symptoms in isolation. We need to heal that entire community"


One of the greatest challenges facing American educational leaders and policy-makers is failing schools and the inequities between students in failing and non-failing schools (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Easton & Luppescu, 2010; Fullan, 2005). Most of the failing schools serve children who live in urban neighborhoods, are disproportionately children of color, and face numerous risk factors such as poverty and crime (Hileman, Clark, & Hicks, 2012; McKinsey, 2009; Noguera, 2008). Children who attend these schools will face a drab future if the schools continue to fail them (Brady, 2003).

Education reform efforts continue to focus on how to turnaround failing schools and how to help the children in these schools accomplish academic success. Leading scholars have identified a number of successful strategies for helping failing schools and the children at-risk of failure in those schools to succeed (Byrk et al., 2010; Scheurich, 1998). These strategies include turnaround leadership (Fullan, 2005); improving instructional quality; and strong school ties with families and community organizations (Byrk et al., 2010; Steen & Noguera, 2010).

School-family-community partnerships have long been heralded as important in helping children succeed academically (Epstein, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). A variety of partnerships have been implemented and their results documented. The literature on partnerships is replete on mentoring and tutoring programs, after-school enrichment programs, and parent and family involvement programs.
Frequently, schools and faith-based organizations build partnerships to help support teachers, students, families, and communities (Green-Powell, Hilton, & Joseph, 2011; Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Miller & Engel, 2011; Roehlkepartain, 2007; Shirley, 2001). However, little attention has been paid to studying faith-based school-family-community partnerships and outcomes. It is possible that faith-based partnerships may provide a rich source of support and resources for schools and families, may foster protective factors and developmental assets for children, and promote resilience and academic success for children.

Failing Schools

Numerous education reform efforts during the past decade have focused on failing schools, and turning around failing schools (Bryk, et al., 2010; Fullan, 2005). Typically, failing schools are schools in which large percentages of students are performing poorly on academic indicators especially on state assessments (Brady, 2003). More often than not, failing schools exist in urban neighborhoods and are attended by mostly children in poverty, and children of color (Scheurich, 1998). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act required each state to identify the schools that were failing. Within each state the schools chosen were Title 1 schools (Brady, 2003). Title 1 is the name given to a school containing what we call disadvantaged children. In fact the Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 reads as follows "Title I-Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged" (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq. Title 1, Sec 101). The mandate required that states:

". . .meet the educational needs of low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools...and ...closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers. . ." (Title 1:Sec 1001.2, 1001.3).
Title I schools are schools that serve at least 40% of low-income children, requiring free and reduced lunch. These children are considered low achieving and high-poverty (NCES, 2013). While all urban schools are not failing, many of them are categorized as failing (Scheurich, 1998).

**Urban Neighborhoods**

Urban neighborhoods consist of schools where children are often exposed to poverty and crime at higher rates than students in non-urban schools (Chau, Thampi & Wight, 2010). In 2010, urban children were more than twice as likely to live in poverty (30%) than those in suburban (13%) locations, and more likely to receive free and reduced lunch (38%; Lippamn, Burns, & McArthur, 1996). Urban schools tend to have greater concentrations of low-income children and children of color. Over 50% of children of color experience poverty, live in urban school districts, and attend failing schools (KewalRamani, Gilbertson & Fox, 2007). In 2005, in the U.S. there were more families of color (i.e., Blacks, American Indians/Alaska Natives, Hispanics, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders) living in poverty than Whites (KewalRamani, Gilbertson & Fox, 2007). Sixteen percent of the 38.1 million families with children under 18 were living in poverty. The percentage of children living in poverty in the U.S. in 2011 was highest for Black children (36%) (Wight, Chau, & Aratani, 2011). Hispanics living in poverty were 34% as compared to Whites (12%) and Asian children (15%). These children are exposed to greater risks, resulting in less desirable outcomes.

**Children At-Risk**

Oulette, Briscoe and Tyson, (2004) described children at-risk as children from low-income families who live in underserved inner-city neighborhoods marked by racial segregation, low-wage work, joblessness, and high poverty. Some challenges children in poverty face are homelessness, incarcerated parents, neighborhoods characterized by crime, drugs and violence, cultural and language issues as well as racial discrimination (Holcomb-McCoy, 1998). The more risk factors children encounter, the more
likely they are to experience adverse outcomes (Robbins et al., 2012). Children experiencing risk factors have an increased chance of negative outcomes including academic failure- poor math and reading scores, low attendance, externalizing behaviors, and delinquent behavior (Child Trends, 2010). However school-family-community partnerships have been an essential aspect of turning failing schools around (Bryk, et al., 2010).

**Education Reform - Turnaround Failing Schools**

Education reform scholars have identified strategies for turning around failing schools and helping children in these schools to have academic success (Bryk et al., 2010; Fullan, 2005; Steen & Noguera, 2010). These strategies include turnaround leadership (Fullan, 2005); instructional quality (Fullan, 2002); and strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities (Epstein, 1995). Numerous high poverty schools serving children at-risk have shown positive outcomes through school-family-community partnerships (Bryan, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Scheurich, 1998; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009).

Recently, much focus has been on Geoffrey Canada’s Harlem Children Zone’s model to helping children at-risk succeed. Geoffrey Canada combined many of the successful strategies identified as necessary to improve or turnaround schools with school-family-community partnerships and health and community services (Evans, 2011). Canada recognized that schools that serve the nation’s neediest children cannot succeed if they fail to meet the students’ non-academic needs (Steen & Noguera, 2010). Children at-risk are not failing because they do not work hard enough or they do not have supportive families. Children at-risk are failing because they do not have the supports, resources and networks as children in more affluent families (American School Counselor Association, 2010; Moore & Redd, 2010). School-family-community partnerships can provide the experiences and relationships that build social capital for families at-risk (Bryan & Henry, 2012).
Successful Strategies for Helping Failing Schools

Numerous literature has focused on helping low income children of color to succeed (Bryan 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006; Williams & Bryan, 2013; Zalaquett, 2006). Poverty does not equal failure. Despite the large body of research that focuses on the failure of students from low-income, urban areas, other research suggest that many of these students experience academic success given the right conditions. (Wyner, Bridgeland & Dilulio, 2007). Numerous types of partnership programs are described in the literature. Epstein (1995) developed a typology of six types of partnership involvement to categorize the various partnership activities or programs that exist in schools. The most popular partnership activities or programs described in the literature are mentoring programs, tutoring programs, after-school enrichment programs, and college preparation programs. Schools, parents, and community organizations partner to implement these programs with the aim of increasing student academic and personal-social outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

Ecological systems, resilience and positive youth development together build a conceptual framework by which we can study children at-risk of failing and how school-family-community partnerships can foster educational resilience and provide the supports, resources and networks that children need in order to be successful.

Bioecological Model

Children’s development is influenced by the ecological contexts of which they are at the center (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 1997). These multiple contexts include schools, families, communities, and society in general. Bronfenbrenner proposed that both the environment and the individual (biology) have an influence on children’s development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). His bioecological model of human development, which was an extension of his earlier ecological systems
theory, encouraged a focus not only on context but understanding the process of how children develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The purpose of the bioecological model is to examine how the various systems of the environment and their interrelationships between these systems impact a child’s development as well as how the child influences the various systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). These multiple contexts are the settings whereby young people can contribute to their communities as well as have communities invest in youth- a bidirectional relationship (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Therefore, a child’s development cannot be evaluated solely in his immediate environment but by examining a child’s interactions with the family, neighborhood, community institutions (e.g. the school, religious institutions) and peer groups as well as the specific culture with which the family identifies. The factors that place children at-risk are result of a breakdown in children’s ecological contexts (Garmezy, 1974). School-family-community partnerships are a part of these ecological contexts that can provide children with the environments, relationships and experiences to reduce risks and foster personal, social and academic success (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

**Resilience**

Resilience theory is the study of how individuals are able to positively adapt amidst risk and significant adversity (Garmezy, 1991; Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Some call it the ability to ‘bounce back’ (Rutter, 2000) in situations that most people would not have been able to do. This dynamic process is called ‘resilience’ (Rutter, 2012). Resilience is not a trait but a process involving the existence of protective mechanisms and factors that predict resilience within a person (Luthar et al., 2000).

The purpose of resilience theory is to examine the risk factors that place children at-risk and to determine what are the protective factors that reduce risk factors and foster resilience in children helping children to become competent and succeed in spite of their circumstances (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Masten, 2001). Protective factors are the processes that foster resilience reducing the negative effects of stress and adversity and decreasing the likelihood of negative outcomes (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013).
When schools, families and communities partner to provide children with protective factors, they become more resilient and are able to achieve greater success amidst their adverse circumstances (Bryan, 2005; Masten, 2001). Goldstein and Brooks (2013) describe three types of protective factors: (1) dispositional attributes (temperament) of the individual that that elicit predominantly positive responses from the environment (2) socialization practices within the family that encourage trust, autonomy, initiative and connections to others, and (3) external support systems in the neighborhood and community that reinforce self-esteem and self-efficacy. These protective factors help children to overcome adversity and succeed in spite of their circumstances (Zimmerman & Arunkumar, 1994; Bernard, 1995; Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002).

**Positive Youth Development**

Youth development was being studied and researched since the 1990’s. The medical model, educators, child psychologists all viewed youth as people with problems (Damon, 2004). For years children have been called at-risk, juvenile delinquent, bullies, ‘rotten apples’. Youth were known to display risky and destructive behaviors (Lerner et al., 2005). The goal of practitioners, educators and youth workers were to identify the bad behavior of these children and correct what had gone wrong with young people. The mental health model focus was that of problems and deficits and the solution was to punish the young people displaying these behaviors. Many were concerned about these ‘troubled youth’ since the 1900s.

The transition from youth development to positive youth development took place between 1900s through until the 1990s (Sesma, Mannes, & Scales, 2013). Many changing societal forces in the past decade caused parents to work more than one job and be therefore away from the home for long periods. Communities were weakened by the high mobility of families (Ferber, Gaines & Goodman, 2005). The community and neighborhoods which once watched out for children became violent and unsafe due to the increase in crime, drugs and poverty. Policy debates pondered the fact that the United States was rearing
youth who may grow into adults who are not responsible citizens but instead revert to drugs, teen pregnancy, and school failure.

The twentieth century pushed for society to see as its responsibility the need to support young people in helping them to develop into caring and responsible adults. The Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth recommended that children when placed in settings that integrate family, school and community efforts, acquire developmental assets which promote positive youth development (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Developmental assets are “a set of interrelated experiences, relationships, skills and values that are known to enhance a broad range of youth outcomes and are assumed similarly for all youth” (Sesma et al., 2013, p 428). According to Ferber et al., (2005), “Kids who feel safe, valued and connected to caring adults are more likely to be positive about life, engaged in school and emotionally healthy; they also are less likely to participate in destructive or delinquent behavior” (p.1). The outlook on youth became more positive as people focused on their possibilities and resources to be developed (Lerner at. al, 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003).

In summarizing the framework for school-family-community partnerships, we note that in the 1990s, there was a paradigm shift among youth workers, practitioners, policy makers as they began to see youth as unique individuals with strengths and resources and the capability to contribute positively to the world. Some of this came about out of genuine care but funding initiatives were pushing for many of these youth issues to be addressed as national rates of poverty, divorce, family mobility and single parenthood were had accelerated (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2004). This shift came about as researchers introduced the concept of resilience and ecological contexts (Sesma et al., 2013). All youth were seen as having the ability to succeed and thrive despite adversity.

School-family-community partnership programs were recommended to create the settings that reduce risks, build social capital, foster academic resilience, reduce delinquent behaviors and create developmental assets for children (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). However, policy makers, schools, families, program developers and practitioners desire to see fully articulated partnership programs that can be
implemented and studied systematically and rigorously, to see if they are making a difference in children at-risk of school failure and are effective in terms of outcomes. More specifically where the literature is dearth on outcomes is with school-family-community partnerships that are faith-based (Green-Powell et al., 2011).

School-Family-Community Partnerships

Rationale for School-Family-Community Partnerships

School-family-community partnerships are collaborative initiatives involving school personnel, community volunteers, and families. Partners come together to plan and coordinate programs to benefit students (Bryan, 2005). School-family-community partnerships are an essential aspect of turning failing schools around (Bryk, et al., 2010). Children at-risk of school failure are not at-risk in isolation, but are impacted by the ecological systems of which they are located in the center. These systems include family, school, mental and physical health agencies, social service agencies, libraries, faith-based organizations, universities, and businesses. Therefore, schools alone cannot help children succeed (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012). Children develop and succeed best when schools engage all of the ecological systems that influence children (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Epstein, 1995).

Research has shown that despite risk factors, schools, families and communities can partner to provide children with the protective factors that promote resilience and foster personal, social and academic success (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Masten, 2001). Protective factors are the developmental supports and opportunities, such as caring and supportive adults, and high expectations of parents and teachers (Benard, 2004). What is needed in these schools is an alliance of adults comprised of school counselors, school personnel, families, and community members who shift from viewing children at-risk to viewing children’s strengths, talents, resources, and possibilities (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Catalano et al., 2004; Youngblade, Theokas, Schulenberg, Curry, Huang, & Novak, 2007).
When school counselors connect teachers, school staff, families, and community members, this allows counselors to impact children’s lives by creating a spider web of support for students and families that result in asset-rich schools, families, and communities (Bryan & Henry, 2008). Schools, families, and community members can collaborate to foster strengths-based partnerships, classroom, school wide, and community based programs for children at-risk (Bryan, 2005). These partnerships can help to create developmental assets that foster positive youth development (Sesma et al, 2013). These assets are the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible adults (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, Sesma Jr, Hong, & Roehlkepartain, 2006).

**Rationale for Faith-Based Partnerships**

In 2001, President George Bush launched the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) to explore ways in which faith-based organizations can be mobilized to enhance school and community outcomes (Shirley, 2001). In 2010, President Obama renamed the FBCI, the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP) to promote a culture of high expectations and student achievement by forging partnerships between schools and community based organizations – secular and non-secular. Faith-based school-family-community partnerships have been a federal mandate over the past decade, yet little has been written about the outcomes of these faith-based partnerships. Most of what has been written emphasizes the importance of linkages between faith-based organizations and schools and the potential of these linkages to promote positive outcomes for children, families, and communities ((Green-Powell et al., 2011; Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Miller & Engel, 2011; Roehlkepartain, 2007; Shirley, 2001). A need exists to understand if the potential in these faith-based partnerships is indeed realized in positive outcomes for students and schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a faith-based school-family-community partnership—Just Love, between a large suburban church and a Title 1, urban elementary school Charisma Elementary
School (Charisma ES; pseudonym). This study examined the differences in student outcomes (i.e. academic, behavior and attendance) between Charisma ES and another matching school- Joseph Elementary School (Joseph ES; pseudonym) without a faith-based school-family-community partnership. These same variables were examined within Charisma ES to determine if Just Love had a potential influence on adopted classrooms compared to non-adopted classrooms and mentored students compared to non-mentored students The study also examined the perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations of Just Love through the voices of the children involved in the partnership. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the faith-based school-family-community partnership comprehensive programs (i.e., adoption, mentoring and rewards), thus providing insights about the potential influence of a faith-based partnership on students and their academic-related outcomes and increasing knowledge about faith-based partnerships with schools.

**Significance of the Study**

Despite widespread belief in the value of school-family-community partnerships in many education and community settings, the criticism frequently launched is that partnership programs and practices have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation (Agronick, Clark, O’Donnell, & Steuve, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Few studies have utilized any formal evaluation model or rigorous study design. The field is evolving with increasing calls for empirical research that illuminates what specific aspects and interventions of partnership programs lead to changes in student and school outcomes.

This study evaluated a comprehensive faith-based school-family-community partnership program (i.e., mentoring, adoption, and rewards) in an urban elementary school and provided insights about the influence of the partnership on students and their academic-related outcomes, increasing knowledge about faith-based partnerships with schools.

Further, this dissertation study extended the literature on faith-based partnerships with schools.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided the evaluation of the Just Love partnership for three academic years, 2010-2013, with 2009 as a baseline year.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership program and a matching school without this program?

2. What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between students in adopted classes and students in non-adopted classes?

3. a) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between mentored students and students not mentored?

   b) What differences exist in attendance rates by years of mentoring?

Qualitative Research Questions

4. What were students’ perceived satisfactions of the Just Love programs?

5. What were students’ experiences as a result of the Just Love programs?

6. What suggestions would participants have regarding how to improve the Just Love programs (challenges, recommendations for improvements)?

Definition of Major Terms

School-Family-Community Partnerships

School-family-community partnerships are collaborative initiatives involving school personnel, families, and community members and organizations as mutual and equal partners (Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012). Community organizations may include universities, businesses, faith-based organizations, libraries, mental health and social service agencies. Partners collaborate in planning, coordinating, and
implementing programs and activities at home, at school, and in the community that build strengths and resilience in children to enhance their academic, personal, social, and college-career outcomes (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

**Community-Based School-Family-Community Partnerships**

Community-based school-family-community partnerships involve members or representatives of community organizations such as universities, businesses, faith-based organizations, libraries, mental health and social service agencies. They aim to collaborate with schools and families in order to provide social and health services, mental health services, wrap-around services, mentoring, tutoring, parent education and any service to strengthen and improve children and families (National Education Association, 2011). Many community organizations in partnership with schools are geared towards meeting the needs of both school and surrounding community or neighborhoods by providing resources needed to help children learn and do well in school and to be prepared for life. One example of a community organization, Communities in Schools (CIS) had as its mission:

*To provide a multitude of services for students, including: tutoring, mentoring, literacy programs, after school programs, case management, FCAT preparation, workforce preparation, career exploration, youth leadership training, alternative education sites, parent involvement programs, violence prevention, character development, and college scholarships. CIS also establishes and maintains collaborative partnerships with local community stakeholders, and provides communities with a model process for making the most of resources to surround students with the specific support they need to stay in school* (Henry County District Website, 2013; pseudonym for school district).
Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnerships

Faith-based school-family-community partnerships are a subset of community-based partnerships. Faith-based partnerships are not that different from community-based partnerships except that faith-based organizations usually have a mission to promote aspects of their religion for an improved way of life of the individual. President George Bush at his time of office described the purpose of faith-based initiatives as:

The paramount goal is compassionate results, and private and charitable groups, including religious ones, should have the fullest opportunity permitted by law to compete on a level playing field, so long as they achieve valid public purposes. . . . The delivery of social services must be results-oriented and should value the bedrock principles of pluralism, nondiscrimination, evenhandedness, and neutrality. (United States Department of Health and Human Services, http://archive.hhs.gov/fbci/, 2007)

Neither President Bush or President Obama give a uniform definition for faith-based organizations but gave more an example of what faith-based partnerships can offer to schools, families and communities. Some of the factors that are more specific to faith-based organizations are that there may retain their “religious terms in its name”, and “continue to carry out its mission, including the definition, development, practice, and expression of its religious beliefs” (Federal Register, 2004; Participation in Education Department Programs by Religious Organizations; Providing for Equal Treatment of All Education Program Participants; Final Rule 76.532, 2i, ii). However if the faith-based organization receives a state administered grant, they may not “engages in inherently religious activities, such as religious worship, instruction, or proselytization, but must offer those services separately in time or location from any programs or services supported by a sub grant from a State under a State-administered program of the Department” (Federal Register, 2004; 34 CPR Part 76, c).
The Just Love School-Family-Community Partnership Program

Just Love was the partnership program evaluated (evaluand) in this study. Just Love, a faith-based school-family-community partnership, was formed in collaboration with a large suburban church and an urban elementary school- Charisma ES. The partnership was developed using a seven-step partnership process model of building school-family-community partnerships, which believes that “successful partnerships are intentionally infused with the principles of democratic collaboration. . . empowerment, social justice, (and has a) strengths focus” (Bemak & Chung, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2012; Nelson, Prilleltensky, & MacGillivary, 2001).

Just Love’s vision was to have the volunteers provide love, care, supportive adult relationships and service to the teachers, students, and parents of Charisma E.S. through a comprehensive three pronged program: Just Mentor (i.e., a school-based mentoring program), Just Connect (i.e., a classroom adoption program), and. Just Rewards (i.e., a school wide student incentives/rewards and parent involvement program). This partnership was multi systemic: Just Mentor met needs at the individual level; Just Connect was a small group program meant to meet needs at the classroom level; and Just Rewards was a school wide student incentive program whose goal was to meet the needs of all children. Below is the logo for the Just Love (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Logo of the Faith-Based Partnership Just Love.
Faith-based volunteers were encouraged to serve in a low income, low achieving, high poverty school serving children at-risk- Charisma Elementary School (E.S.). Volunteers were recruited using the following church announcement:

*Just Love is a Christ-centered calling for members of the church to help the children of Charisma Elementary School, a socially and academically “in need” school in Henry District. Come be a testament to the Christian faith at work. Please, don’t miss this opportunity to join Just Love in the remarkable journey to deliver Christ’s presence to those in need in an academic setting, VOLUNTEER TO Just Love on Charisma Elementary students, families and teachers. God has called us to LOVE “Because Christ Loved Us” 1 John 4:19.*

Written in the Just Love training manual were Henry County School District policies established for volunteers of faith-based organizations. Volunteers were trained in all of the policies and to adhere to them in order to maintain a good relationship with the school. Here is an example of one of the district guidelines: “*advocating a particular political or religious viewpoint or alternative lifestyle is not allowed*”.

**Summary**

School-family-community partnerships are an essential aspect of turning failing schools around (Bryk, et al.) and helping children at-risk to succeed (Zalaquett, 2006). Essentially, schools cannot help children succeed alone (Bronfenbrener; 1997; Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012). Schools can collaborate to build partnerships with families and communities as a strategy to improve failing schools. Ultimately, school-family-community partnership programs create the environments, relationships, and experiences that reduce risks, build social capital, increase academic achievement and attendance, decrease behavior issues, enhance school climate, foster resilience, and create developmental assets for children and adolescents (American School Counselor Association, 2010; Benard, 2004; Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

*American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and the education reform literature has launched a call for school counselors to increase their involvement in school-family-community partnerships in order to increase academic success for children but also to evaluate partnerships and be*
actively involved in removing barriers to partnerships (ASCA, 2010). The U.S. Department of Education, the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), have initiated a challenge for schools and communities called “Together for Tomorrow”. This challenge encourages schools to work with faith-based and secular partners to move them from ‘education outsiders to education insiders’ (US Department of Education, TFT.challenge.gov, 2012, p.1). The focus of these partnerships is to improve failing schools by measuring the effect of these partnerships on outcomes (Attendance, Behavior, Course performance, and College access (the ABCs)). This dissertation will focus on evaluating a specific faith-based partnership and its effect on attendance, behavior and academics. The study will explore the potential of Just Love, a faith-based partnership as an ‘education insider’ in promoting resilience and academic success for children at-risk of failure as well as the possibility of promoting positive youth development.

Overview of the Dissertation Chapters

This dissertation comprises of five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the context and background to the study with a brief introduction to the problem, the conceptual framework of the study, significance of the study, and a brief preview of the research questions that guided the evaluation. Chapter 2 includes a literature review, which was used to build the framework needed to understand school-family-community partnerships within children’s ecological contexts, the concept of resilience and positive youth development for children at-risk of school failure. The literature review also provided a rationale for the study of faith-based partnerships. Chapter 3 includes the methodology of the study, the research design, and the process of data analysis. Chapter 4 includes both the qualitative and the quantitative results, and Chapter 5 presents the findings, discussions, conclusions, limitations and implications of the study to the field of counseling, education, evaluation and faith-based initiatives in schools.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter includes a review of the literature, which was used to build the conceptual framework needed to understand school-family-community partnerships within children’s ecological contexts, the concept of resilience and positive youth development for children at-risk of school failure. The process of building school-family-community partnerships and the different types of partnerships are discussed. Finally, a rationale for the study of faith-based partnerships is provided.

Student Demographics in Failing Schools/Setting the Context

Assumptions are often made that low-income children of color and their parents’ assumed lack of commitment to their children’s education is to blame for school failure (Scheurich, 1998). However, in a National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) report, urban students when compared to suburban students were at least as likely to have families with characteristics that support desirable educational outcomes including having a parent who completed college, having parents who have high expectations for their children’s education and as likely to have parents who talked to them about school ((Lippamn, Burns & McArthur, 1996). Even though research has shown that students from urban schools living in poverty have less supportive family backgrounds and less successful educational outcomes, these results are evidence that there are instances where students even though faced with risk factors such as poverty, health and safety risks perform similar or even above some students in non-urban areas (Lippamn, Burns & McArthur, 1996).
More than half of first generation minority students (61.9%) attending a university in Texas in 1997 had low attrition and GPAs similar to other students whose parents had attended college. This finding challenges the deficit paradigm that students whose parents have not attended college always do worse academically (Zalaquett, 1999). Coming from a family of color, or going to an urban school or living in poverty does not mean these children will fail. There needs to be a paradigm shift where we view children of color in urban schools as children with strengths regardless of their circumstances. To understand how to make this shift in the way we view children at-risk of failure is to first become aware of their challenges. Below I discuss the factors that put children at-risk for poor academic outcomes.

**Children At-Risk**

Millions of children in the American economy are ravaged by poverty, hunger, and homelessness (Children’s Defense Fund, 2010). U. S. Bureau of the Census (1997) report describes ‘at-risk’ children as children who have about six indicators that put them at-risk: poverty, welfare dependence, absent parents, one-parent families, unwed mothers, and parents who did not graduate from high school. Poverty is considered the single greatest threat to children’s well-being (NCCP, 2012). Poverty as described by the U.S. Census Bureau’s official measure considers families as poor if their income is less than 100 percent of the poverty threshold and families as low income if their families have an income less than 200 percent of the poverty threshold (Addy, & Wight, 2012). The poverty threshold is used by policy makers as a socioeconomic indicator to evaluate economic conditions and to allocating funds to communities. This threshold changes annually based on the cost of living using the Consumer Price Index (Bishaw, 2012). The federal poverty level for a family of four in 2011 was $23,350 (Addy, & Wight, 2012; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). The National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) (2012), shows that families cannot cover basic expenses with such a low income and it is suggested that families need an income twice the poverty threshold in order to make ends meet (Addy, & Wight, 2012). In 2010, 46.2 million people in the U.S. lived below the poverty line of which 15.5 million were children
under the age of 18 years (Aber, Morris & Raver, 2012). This meant that 15.1% of the U.S. population and 21% of U.S. children live in poverty, or are considered poor (Aber et. al. 2012). This national poverty rate has increased from 11% in 1973 to 15.9% in 2011.

The NCCP uses a tool called the *Young Child Risk Calculator* to provide the national and state prevalence of risk factors children in poverty experience under the age of nine years old (Robbins, Stagman & Smith, 2012). The seven key risk factors for children under age nine are: living in large families (four or more children), living in households without English speakers, low parental education (lacking a high school degree), residential mobility (change residences one or more times in a year), living in single-parent households, having a teen mother and non-employed parents (Robbins et. al. 2012). Of the 35.8 million children under age nine living in poverty in the U.S., 25% live with multiple risk factors (NCCP, 2013).

They are at higher risk for poor physical and mental health and lags in cognitive and behavioral development than children who live in affluent families (Moore & Redd, 2010; Robbins et. al. 2012). These outcomes may include the development of substantial emotional problems including hyperactivity, dropping out of school, and involvement with crime (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1997).

**Successful Strategies for Turning Around Failing Schools**

In a study of Chicago school reform starting in 1980’s and 1990’s, Bryk et al. (2010) found five essential supports necessary for improving failing schools: (a) leadership as the driver for change; (b) parent-school-community ties; (c) professional capacity; (d) student-centered learning climate; and (e) instructional guidance. Steen and Noguera (2010) call for a broader bolder approach to education reform that incorporates investment in supports for children such as high quality pre-school and early childhood programs and school-health linked services. They also suggest expanded partnership roles for school counselors in order to connect children to high quality in-school and out-of-school enrichment programs and to health services.
Scheurich studied highly successful schools in both urban and rural contexts that serve low-income, children of color to determine what made these schools succeed (Scheurich, 1998). Scheurich (1998) discovered that these highly successful schools possess core beliefs and an organizational culture that contribute to their success (Scheurich, 1998). These core beliefs are (a) all children can succeed at high academic levels-no exceptions allowed, (b) child- or learner-centered schools, (c) all children must be treated with love, appreciation, care and respect- no exceptions allowed, (d) the racial culture including the first language of the child is always valued- no exceptional allowed, and (e) the school exists for and serves the community- there is little separation. The seven organizational culture characteristics are (a) strong shared vision, (b) loving caring environments for children and adults, (c) strongly collaborative-we are a family, (d) innovative, experimental, openness to new ideas, (e) hardworking but not burnt out, (f) appropriate conduct is built into the organizational culture, and (g) school staff as a whole hold themselves accountable for the success of all children. Within these principles lie the characteristics of school-family-community partnerships such as schools serving the community, providing loving and caring environments for children and adults and being collaborative. When approaches to education fail children, educators need to move away from traditional approaches (Scheurich, 1998). Numerous high poverty schools serving children at-risk that have shown positive outcomes through school-family-community partnerships (Bryan, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Scheurich, 1998; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009).

Most school improvement frameworks identify strong ties and partnerships between schools, families, and communities as integral to turning schools around. Research indicates that when schools build strong school-family-community partnerships, children attend school more regularly, behave better at school, and perform better academically; parents feel more welcome at school and become more involved in their children’s education; and teachers feel more supported and satisfied (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).
Strategies for Helping Children At-Risk Succeed

A qualitative study, involving eight African American college students, who grew up with challenging backgrounds and have succeeded academically despite adversity, were interviewed as to what made them successful (Williams & Bryan, 2013). These students grew up in low-income (i.e., eligible for free and reduced-price lunch), urban, single-parent households and attended a high-poverty high school (>76% on free and reduced-price lunch). The study identified home, school and community factors and processes that fostered resilience and academic success for these African American students.

Home factors included parents involved in their children’s education, observing family members personal experiences of hardship, having positive mother–child relationships, and extended family networks as a source of support in helping them to overcome difficulties (Williams & Bryan, 2013). Parent’s involvement and high expectations were the most important contributing factors to the student’s success.

School factors comprised of supportive school-based adults who showed them care, warmth, concern, openness and understanding, close friendships among peers with the same values, good teaching, and extracurricular school activities such as athletics, academic clubs and social organizations. Supportive school-based adults included teachers, counselors, coaches and college recruiters.

Community factors included social support networks such as friends, families, neighbors and other people within their communities who were there to offer encouragement, support and advice at critical times, e.g., losing a close friend to a violent death or facing eviction. Another community factor was out-of-school time activities that were usually coordinated by the local churches and community organizations. Students reported that the church was very influential to successful academic achievement (Williams & Bryan, 2013).

Indicative of the literature on caring, the students spoke of the adults in their lives as caring which resulted in students trusting and respecting the adults (Stipek, 2006). These caring adults (a) attempted to understand the challenges students faced, (b) advocated on behalf of students’ academic and nonacademic
needs, (c) acted as parental figures, (d) reinforced positive academic performance and student behavior, and (e) set high yet realistic expectations (Williams & Bryan, 2013, p.296). Caring adults and parent and teachers high expectations are factors confirmed in the literature for fostering educational resilience in urban students (Bryan, 2005).

Educators often view Latino students using a culturally deficient perspective. They view them as incapable of succeeding academically and expect that they will drop out of school (Zalaquett, 2006). Unfortunately, many Latinos find it difficult to challenge these negative beliefs and often live up to these expectations. In fact in 2011, the percentage of high school dropouts among Latinos was 14%, the highest dropout rate by ethnicity (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2013). However, there are Latino students who beat the odds and achieve academic success (Zalaquett, 2006). In a study of 12 Latino students from a large urban university, researchers were able to examine the barriers and the core factors that led these students to college instead of dropping out of high school. Some of these barriers include not having adult guidance in making educational choices for higher education either from parents or teachers or counselors, misinformation about postsecondary application processes and scholarship opportunities and making poor choices due to a lack of knowledge.

Eight core factors that were critical in the Latino student’s decision to pursue college were: having family support and families valuing education, knowing education would give them a better future, wanting to honor their parents and help their siblings, having a sense of pride in their academic success knowing it was having a positive impact upon the way other perceived them, friendship, receiving scholarships and school personnel and last but critical community support. Community support help students to overcome challenges but also the persons who gave them community scholarships remained a support for the students.

Strategies that can assist Latino students to pursue and be successful in college is first to view the students as capable learners and provide collaborative partnerships between school, families and communities that offer student positive role models, mentoring and assisting students in the college,
financial aid and scholarship processes (Zalaquett, 2006). Latino parents do have high expectations for their children and support them the best ways they can in pursuing college (Auerbach, 2004). School-family-community partnerships can provide Latino parents with the social ties and networks, resources and support in helping their children navigate choosing a college, college application and financial aid process (Bryan, Griffin, & Henry, 2103). Schools can develop alliances between school, community agencies and churches to plan culturally specific family centered activities that prepare Latino students for postsecondary education which may include taking parents on college visits with their children (Zalaquett, 2006; Bryan, Griffin, & Henry, 2103).

There is a paucity of research concerning urban American Indian youth and resilience (LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006). LaFromboise, et al., (2006) examined resilience in the context of urban American Indian youth living on or near reservations and examine the factors that predict resilient outcomes in this high-risk population. This study, using a resilience framework, developed measures to identify the youth who were resilient, that is youth who displayed prosocial outcomes as opposed to problem behavior outcomes. The study also examined multiple contexts-individual, family and cultural predictors of resilience. The findings of the study agree with earlier research on resilience that adolescents can be resilient despite environmental stressors such as poverty and exposure to high risky parental behaviors. Over 60% of the American Indian children had positive outcomes and low levels of problems behaviors in the midst of high adversity. However, perceived discrimination had the most harmful effect on these American Indian youth and age was another factor. There was 10% decline in resiliency as age increased. Resilience declined by 40% for each increment in perceived discrimination This raises some concern for these youth as they get older and are faced with discrimination, not even protective factors seems to moderate this effect. For those youth who were most resilient, the protective factor of enculturation was the greatest predictor of higher levels of resilience. Maternal warmth and community support (supportive parent or a caring adult in the community such as a teacher, community leader or adult member of a cooperative group) were other protective factors that
resulted in positive outcomes for the youth. Findings supported the protective effects of community support—perceived community support resulted in greater resilience. Partnerships can provide the youth ways to cope with discrimination.

The Conceptual Framework

School-family-community partnerships are an essential aspect of turning failing schools around (Bryk, et al.) and helping children at-risk to succeed (Zalaquett, 2006). Essentially, schools cannot help children succeed alone (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2008, 2012). This means building partnerships between schools, families, and communities. These partnerships provide the protective factors that children at-risk need to be educationally resilient (Benard, 2004; Bryan, 2005; Werner, 1995). School-family-community partnerships create developmental assets that foster positive youth development (Sesma et. al, 2013). Below, I discuss Bronfenbrenner’s bio ecological model, resilience, and positive youth development as a conceptual framework for this dissertation study.

Bioecological Model of Human Development

Urie Bronfenbrenner established the bioecological model (BEM) of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994), an extension of his earlier ecological system theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). Bronfenbrenner proposed that both the environment and the individual (biology) have an influence children’s development (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The bioecological model encouraged a focus not only on context but understanding the process of how children develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1997). Bronfenbrenner’s theory demonstrates how various systems of the environment and their interrelationships between these systems impact a child’s development as well as how the child influences the various systems.

According to Bronfenbrenner, our environment is not one single entity but consists of overlapping, interactive “systems.” He describes them as being nested. These interactions lie in the
context of five nested systems- microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and a fifth system called the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Miller, 2011). The microsystem involves interactions of the child and other people in their immediate setting (family, school, faith-based organizations, peer groups, neighborhood, doctor’s office). This system directly impacts the child. The mesosystem involves the interactions between two or more settings containing the child, within the microsystem (peer group and school, family to school, school to church). The exosystem involves the social institutions in which the child does not directly participate, but which have an indirect influence on the child (home and parent’s work place, community health and welfare services, media, school board, friends of family). The macrosystem involves the interaction of the child with the beliefs, values, expectations and lifestyles of their cultural settings (norms- expectation in society and culture, socioeconomic status, poverty, and ethnicity). There is a fifth system, the chronosystem, which has to do with events that take place in the child’s life over time (divorce, death, war, technology, tornado disaster in Oklahoma) (Bronfenbrenner, 1997; Miller, 2011).

When we study school-family-community partnerships in any of these systems we have a better understanding of how these partnerships enhance development. The most immediate influences on a child’s development are the family, along with local neighborhood or community institutions such as the school, faith-based organizations and peer groups as well as the specific culture with which the family identifies. Families and schools are embedded in communities and emphasize the multidirectionality of family, school, and community relationships –families influence schools, schools influence families, and both affect and are affected by the communities in which they live (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Epstein, 1995; Smith, Connell, Wright, Sizer, Norman, Hurley, & Walker, 1997). Epstein overlapping spheres of influence reports that when schools and families are connected and maintain their relationships in a positive manner that children do better academically (Epstein, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

School-family-community partnerships are about children’s success. A historical case study that assessed the successes and failures of school-community partnerships in an urban high school discovered
that partnerships existing in the exosystem are more successful when they engage the microsystem (Leonard, 2011). For example, a business whose goal was to raise student achievement and graduation rates placed full time “career specialists” in the schools to teach the students the ins and outs on getting a job and then when they left high school the business helped the students get jobs. Prior to being more involved in the school and children’s lives this partnership failed.

Partnerships are also successful when they target smaller groups of student to work with rather than trying to work with too many students. In the same high school, a business partnership decided to focus on a target group of students (90 students and 3 teachers) called “pocket of excellence” and involve others such as the career specialist, administration, another teacher, a parent and the president of another company, resulting in the partnerships being more effective and not as labor intensive (Leonard, 2011). The partnership involved parents and teachers in scheduling students for after-school jobs, paying attention to their academic priorities, and also matching employers to students’ talents and interest.

Partnerships in the exosystem were able to offer social capital supports and access to resources to teachers and students that otherwise would not have access. At the macrosystem level business leaders were able to get state legislature to elect a school committee that promoted “city-wide reforms for school improvement and gains in student development” (Leonard, 2011, p.1004). There was correlation between growth of school-family-community partners and graduation rate. These successful school-family-partnerships resulted in graduation rates increasing from 17% in the 1970s (partnerships were rare) and reached 41% in the 1990s (partnerships very present in the school) (Leonard, 2011). Successful partnerships are partnerships that engage all systems. When integrated into children’s microsystem they result in better educational outcomes and promote student development.

**Resilience**

Risk, vulnerability, stress, cope, adversity, competence and protective factors are all terms associated with resilience. Garmezy’s work in psychopathology on risk, competence and protective
factors was the driving force behind resilience theory (Rutter, 2012). He first studied schizophrenia patients examining their social competence - ability to adapt to work, have social relations and function responsibly despite their adverse challenges which were not typical of many patients with schizophrenia (Garmezy & Streitmen, 1974). He later studied thriving of children of schizophrenic mothers and the elements called protective factors involved in some of these high risk children being able to survive while others could not. This opened the door for further research on what made some children at-risk able to adapt while others could not (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000). Benard (1997) in her work on resilience recommended a shift in focusing on children as deficits and weaknesses and problems and view youth through a lens of strengths and capabilities (Benard, 1997). This is a result of findings of research examining the characteristics of schools, families, organizations and communities (Benard, 1997).

There are two critical conditions that must take place in order for there to be resilience - (1) The individual must be exposed to significant threat, risks, or adversity (Luthar et al., 2000); and (2) The individual must achieve “positive outcomes, adaptation and high levels of competencies in the face of significant risk, adversity or stress” (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Ross, 2013, p.242).

To truly understand the concept of resilience one must understand risks, protective factors and competence. Risks can vary from ‘major life events’ (divorce, death, serious illness, being raped, abuse, witnessing a murder, tornado destruction) to what may be considered as ‘daily hassles’ that are at lower levels of risk than a major life event but still significant (overly harsh discipline, going to a new school, poor quality childcare, (Masten, 2001; Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Ross, 2013). These risks may come about as a result of psychopathology (prenatal smoking exposure), genetically mediated (physical or sexual abuse) or environmentally mediated (poverty) (Rutter, 2012). Risks disrupt normal functioning, produce psychological discomfort, and tax a person’s resources. Over the years the increase in empirical research discovered variation in adversity to include challenging conditions such as socioeconomic disadvantage, parental mental illness, maltreatment, poverty and community violence, chronic illness, and catastrophic life events (Luthar et al., 2000). Goldstein & Brooks (2013) described a ‘cascade of risks’ such as
poverty, youth being raised in families with psychopathology, trauma, exposure to alcohol and drugs, violence. This has resulted in outcomes for youth such as committing suicide, homicide, depression, substance abuse, bullying, sexual behavior, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and school failure (Benard, 1997; Goldstein & Brooks, 2013). Children who are exposed to such adversity are known to be at-risk or vulnerable (Masten, 2000).

Emmy Werner’s longitudinal research on children in Kauai, Hawaii who had experienced chronic poverty, perinatal stress and parental psychopathology and disruptive family units revealed not only resiliency of one-third of these children but protective factors were found to be in place that helped them to recover and have successful outcomes as adults. Her studies showed how these protective factors were critical to positive outcomes and necessary to be a trait or character of those who are resilient, factors not present in non-resilient children (Werner, 1993, 1995).

Protective factors are the processes that foster resilience reducing the negative effects of stress and adversity and decreasing the likelihood of negative outcomes (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013). They are the developmental supports and opportunities, such as caring and supportive adult relationships, opportunities for meaningful participation in their school and communities, high parent and teacher expectations (Benard, 1997, 2004; Bryan, 2005). Protective factors include ‘consistent caregivers, a positive school climate, good social-emotional skills’ (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013, p.263).

American Psychological Association (APA; 2010) list the following as factors that promote resilience: (a) make connections, (b) avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems, (c) accept that change is a part of living, (d) move toward your goals, (e) take decisive actions, (f) look for opportunities for self-discovery, (g) nurture a positive view of yourself, (h) keep things in perspective, (i) maintain a hopeful outlook, (j) take care of yourself, and (k) additional ways of strengthening resilience may be helpful.

The literature is vast in its varied explanation of protective factors. This is one of the inconsistencies of resilience theory yet it is a great contribution to the field of understanding the resilient
child. Prevention and intervention programs are often put in place to provide these protective factors of youth (Sesma et al., 2013). Competence is another characteristic of resilience and is the successful attainment of developmental tasks appropriate for that person culturally and contextually (positive outcomes), along with an absence of psychopathology in the presence of risks or adversity (Masten, 2000; Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013; Sesma et al., 2013). This results in positive outcomes for youth, which could include personal, social and academic successes (e.g., being kind to others, having quality friendships, moving away to college; Masten, 2000).

Howard & Johnson (2000) examined resilience in 9-12 year old children living in an economically depressed urban area in South Australia. Drastic changes in the ecological systems resulted in unemployment of skilled and semi-skilled workers, reduced social services and high gambling. Families were being affected and in one of the school 70% of families had no working adults in the home and 50% of families in the five schools depended on government assistance. This caused the children to experience trauma and tragedy such as incarceration of a father, another father tried to commit suicide and another was successful at committing suicide, mother using drugs and children having to stay at home to take care of younger brothers and sometimes mother. The purpose of the study was to understand why some children are resilient and why others are not and what makes the difference.

Both teachers and children agreed that the school, family and community played a significant role in promoting resilience in children (Howard & Johnson, 2000). Teacher’s perceptions were that some kids were resilient because the family provided emotional support, and encouraged independence and maturity. They also felt a safe school environment and community programs that providing opportunities for children to have healthy, constructive activities outside the home such as clubs, and access to community parks were important factors for resilience. Children agreed with most of the teacher’s views but also felt that schools could provide special help in overcoming learning difficulties because when a child was failing or falling behind in school work they tended to get into more trouble. The community Learning Assistance Program was beneficial as it helped the children through tutoring and providing
mentors. Children reported that they were able to face challenging circumstances when teachers acted in a nurturing role and provided kids with a caring and safe environment, and when counselors made more time to talk about their problems.

School, family and communities can provide children with the protective factors they need to be resilient with the microsystem being the first in a series of nested social structures that powerfully impact children’s development. Even although partnerships may not be able to change circumstances they provide interventions or strategies that promote resilience (Howard & Johnson, 2000).

In 1992, the HOPE VI program was created by Congress to address the nation's most distressed public housing “impoverished communities with substandard housing and extreme levels of drug trafficking and violent crime” to improved living environments (Cove, Eisman & Popkin, 2005, p. 4). The locations of distressed housing were very challenging for children-“families were very poor; the majority of households with children reported incomes below $10,000 a year, children faced many hazards of living in substandard housing, such as lead paint, mold, inadequate heat, and infestations of cockroaches and other vermin, all of which could seriously affected their health and wellbeing” (Pokin, Eisman & Cove, 2004). An outcome study in 2001 revealed that this involuntary location had placed some children at-risk for serious consequences such as behavior problems, and poor school outcomes (Pokin et. al. 2004, p.1).

In 2003, the HOPE VI Panel Study examined the lives of these families to understand what made some children resilient as a way to guide policy makers and practitioners in developing interventions that protected children from the negative consequences of living in distressed communities and the stresses of involuntary relocation (Cove et. al. 2005).

Resilient children exhibited pro-social behaviors such as positive experiences with caregiving activities of their sibling or mentoring younger children, camp counseling and language support for parents (Cove, Eisman & Popkin, 2005). They had strong self-efficacy being aware of the dangers of their neighborhoods they put in place safety precautions but focused on the positive aspects such as having
friends and family close by and a sense of community. Those who took part in structured after-school activities were 70% more likely to be resilient than those who did not participate in an after-school program. Safety was a concern for parents who did not place their children in after-school activities. Socially competent children were more resilient. They felt valued by other, were confident about their relations with family, teachers and peers and felt successful in school. They asked for help when they needed it and liked to read for pleasure more than non-resilient children.

One factor that made children resilient was having parents who were engaged with their children’s education (Cove e. al. 2005). This study suggested policy interventions that encouraged parent participation in school, help for depressed parents, opportunities for long term counseling being offered to families to cope with the challenges of poverty and the disruption of relocation and the development of high quality and safe after-school programs. Schools, families and communities can partner together to provide these sources of support, counseling, and encouragement for families in distressed housing.

Positive Youth Development

For years children have been called at-risk, juvenile delinquent, bullies, ‘rotten apples’. Youth are known to display risky and destructive behaviors (Lerner et al., 2005). The goal of practitioners, educators and youth workers were to identify the bad behavior of children and correct what had gone wrong with them. The mental health model focus was that of problems and deficits and the solution was to punish the young people displaying these behaviors. You may have heard it said ‘he is good for nothing”. Many were concerned about these ‘troubled youth’ since the 1900s.

In the 1990s, there was a paradigm shift among youth workers, practitioners, policy makers as they began to see youth as unique individuals with strengths and resources and the capability to contribute positively to the world. This shift came about as researchers introduced the concept of resilience and ecological contexts (Sesma et al., 2013). All youth were seen as having the ability to succeed and thrive despite adversity. The outlook on youth became more positive as people focused on their possibilities and
resources to be developed (Lerner et al., 2005; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Bronfenbrenner’s theory of ecological systems and their influence on youth helped psychologists to see the importance of ecological context and how they could inform policy. These multiple contexts were the settings whereby young people could contribute to their communities as well as having communities invest in youth - a bidirectional relationship (Bronfenbrenner, 1997).

The twentieth century became a period in which society saw as its responsibility the need to support young people in helping them to develop into caring and responsible adults. Some of this came about out of genuine care but funding initiatives were pushing for many of these youth issues to be addressed as national rates of poverty, divorce, family mobility and single parenthood were had accelerated (Catalano et al., 2004).

Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses on the strengths, talents, resources and possibilities of children rather than on their risk factors and problem behaviors (Benson et al., 2006). When the focus is placed on strengths of children rather than focusing on their risk factors and the same children are provided the supports and services they need, they are then able to develop the positive attributes needed in order to be successful (Catalano et al., 2004; Youngblade et al., 2007). This theory does not minimize the fact that children are faced with adversities that place them at-risk or that children can behave destructively but emphasizes the need to change our perceptions of children to a view of them as having the potential and capacity to make a positive contribution to the world regardless of how disadvantaged their background (Damon, 2004). There are five core constructs of PYD: (1) Ecological contexts – schools, family, and communities can provide children with programs, supports, opportunities and resources they need, called developmental assets; (2) Nature of the child- having the capacity to grow, thrive and actively engage with supportive contexts; (3) Developmental assets of the child- attributes including skills, competencies, values, dispositions all of which are important for successful engagements in the world; (4) The reduction of high-risk behaviors; and (5) The promotion of thriving (Benson et al., 2006). PYD’s Five C’s (competence, connection, character, confidence and caring/compassion) are the
guidelines that academic personnel view as important for academic success. PYD can help develop in children these characteristics that communities care about but are viewed through a strengths lens.

**Developmental assets.** Developmental assets are “a set of interrelated experiences, relationships, skills and values that are known to enhance a broad range of youth outcomes and are assumed similarly for all youth” (Sesma et al., 2013, p 428). These are the building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible adults (Search Institute, n.d.). There are 40 assets made up of external and internal assets. Internal and external assets help to reduce risky behaviors allowing youth to develop positive attributes needed in order to be successful (Benson, Scales, & Syvertsen, 2010). External assets are the assets formed through relationships and opportunities within the ecological contexts: (a) support, (b) empowerment, (c) boundaries and expectations and (d) constructive use of time (Benson et al., 2006; Search Institute, n.d.). The internal assets are personal qualities-competencies and skills that children use to guide their behavior (a) commitment to learning, (b) positive values, (c) social competencies, and (4) positive identity (Benson et al., 2006; Search Institute, n.d.).

The more assets a person has the more tendencies they have to thrive. Assets are also predictors of thriving. The Search Institute through funding has completed studies from early childhood, middle childhood through adolescence and have shown consistent results whereby the more positive experiences youth have the more likely they are to have developmental success (Sesma et al., 2013). Predictive has been the asset outcome where the fewer assets a youth possess, the more likely they are to engage in maladaptive behaviors. Higher asset levels is a prediction of reduced risky behavior such as violent, antisocial behavior, sexual intercourse and increase in more positive outcomes such as better grades (Benson & Scales, 2009). The research on developmental assets has been evident that the more assets children have regardless of age, gender, SES, race, children do better. Schools, families and communities can work together to promote assets in children.

Community developmental assets are a part of PYD theory, and include youth involvement in structured activities and their perception of community attitudes towards youth. About 1,860 US
residents aged 15 years old filled out a Harris Interactive survey through a password protected e-mail invitation for a study investigating the role of mentors and the quality of mentor relationships and their association with community developmental assets (Schwartz, Chan, Rhodes, & Scales, 2013).

Youth who were actively involved in youth activities and felt that the community had a positive perception of youth were more likely to have a mentor. The quality of the mentor relationship along with positive view of community attitudes toward youth was associated with outcomes such as school engagement, mastery (i.e., to learn as much as I can in school), pro-social values and purpose (i.e., sense of purpose and meaning in life). Therefore communities wanting to get involved with youth need to facilitate quality mentor relationships, as these produce more positive youth outcomes. The mentor relationship quality was more important than having structured activities with youth. Strong and close mentor relationships resulted in communities valuing youth and seeing them in a more positive way.

**Thriving.** Thriving is when the person reaches optimal successful development (not just adequate competence) and this relates to their stage of development (Sesma et al, 2013). It is demonstrable excellence and positive growth that when compared to others are distinct or shows superior competence as compared to previous outcomes. For example, a young man who demonstrates leadership skills when circumstances around them are such to deter him from doing so is thriving, that is having a father who is incarcerated and living in an environment where other young people are living reckless lives. An individual personally determines if he or she is thriving and this is not usually a judgment made by another person (Sesma et al., 2013). Thriving involves moral development, civic engagement and spiritual development (Lerner, Brentano, Dowling, & Anderson, 2002). Lerner et al. (2002) states young people are thriving if they experience the “Five Cs,” through early adolescence- competence, connection, character, confidence and caring/compassion. This means the youth are involved in healthy relationships across ecological contexts and makes positive contributions to themselves as well as others in their community. Every person has the potential to thrive when they possess the developmental assets and are positively influenced by their multiple ecologies. The result is also a reduction in high-risks behaviors.
PYD theory suggests that all youth are capable of healthy behavior when given the supports and assets they need which can result in reduced risky behavior and thriving (Benson et al., 2006). Many youth enter shelters for different reasons, but usually due to family conflict and tension and lack of support and resources. Students in emergency shelters usually have increased risks especially without the supports and basic resources they need (Heinze, 2013). They tend to experience more psychological distress and engage in maladaptive behaviors. Emergency shelters usually allow youth to stay a few days and provide basic needs, family services, individual and family counseling, clothes, transportation, medical care and educational support. Community agencies such as emergency shelters have the opportunity to build assets in youth by providing them structure and support. 82 youth ages 12-19 were given surveys at initial admission, at mid-stay and at departure from the shelter. The researcher examined the developmental assets and adaptive functioning of the youth who resided in a specific emergency shelter.

Findings showed that youth who lived in emergency shelters had lower levels of assets relative to normative samples as to be expected with greater instability in their lives, family conflict, and problems in school. Youth rated the emergency shelter on external asset ratings higher than within their families, school and community. It is possible that youth residing in the shelter felt more supported, empowered and cared for. They also felt safer and embraced the structure and predictability that they were not getting in other ecological contexts. Changes that took place for youth between being admitted and their mid-stay showed significant decrease in distress and increase in life satisfaction. From mid-stay till discharge there was improvement in healthy behaviors and improvement in female caregiver relationship. This study supported the PYD literature which purports that communities that strengthen supports and opportunities help youth to develop a positive self-concept and positive identity whereby they are committed to changing their maladaptive behaviors to more healthy behaviors and making positive changes.

When schools, families, and community members collaborate they can foster strengths-based partnerships, implementing classroom, schoolwide, and community based programs and interventions that
aid in building developmental assets for children at-risk who are vulnerable and disenfranchised (Bryan, 2005). SFC partnerships can provide for youth an alliance of adults who choose to invest in youth and view them positively. The result is the development of competent children who are thriving, successful and make a positive contribution to the world around them (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

**School-Family-Community Partnerships**

School-family-community partnerships are collaborative initiatives involving school personnel, community volunteers, and families. They all come together to plan and coordinate programs to benefit students (Bryan, 2005). On examining urban schools that are having success, one notices that their community impacts many of them in positive ways. President Barack Obama stated, "If poverty is a disease that affects an entire community in the form of unemployment and violence, failing schools and broken homes, then we can't just treat those symptoms in isolation. We need to heal that entire community" (Smith, 2011). Failing schools of poverty can have success, but not by doing it alone. What is needed in these schools is an alliance of adults comprised of school counselors, school personnel, families, and community members who foster strengths-enhancing partnerships that support and empower children and families (Bryan & Henry, 2008).

**The Role of School Counselors in Partnerships**

School counselors can play an integral role in bridging the gap between school staff, family, and community members (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; 2007). According to the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) national model for school counseling, school counselors should be collaborators that bring schools, families, and community members together to provide services and support to students (ASCA, 2010). In their position statement (2010), ASCA endorses the unique and critical role of school counselors in school-family-community partnerships and the essential nature of these partnerships to students’ academic success. Even outside of the school counseling profession,
scholars point to the pivotal role of school counselors in creating partnerships between schools, families, and communities (Epstein & Van Voorhis; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010; Suárez-Orozco, Onaga, & de Lardemelle, 2010; Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2010). School counselors too, regardless of school level, recognize the importance of school-family-community partnerships even when they feel unable to create or facilitate these partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010).

Many school staff view poor and ethnically diverse children and families as morally and culturally deficient and feel that these traits are passed generationally to students (Bryan, 2005). School counselors can build strength-based partnerships that empower students and families and challenge the deficit views of children (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Scheurich, 1998). Counselors are important agents of change within the schools and educators need to see their own advantaged status in embracing families into the school’s culture (Amatea & West-Olatunji, 2007). She suggests that counselors teach their colleagues how to build on the strengths of families and how to block blame from undermining the collaborative process. School activities, she says, should include all families whether they can come to school or not and should contribute to a more collaborative family-centric school climate. Redesigning family-school activities can powerfully impact the culture of a school, encourage parent involvement, and create a more welcoming, family-centric school environment.

School counselors can also foster the educational resilience of children at-risk for academic failure through partnerships (Bryan, 2005; Williams & Bryan, 2013). When school counselors collaborate with stakeholders to provide children with the mentors, tutors, job-training, enrichment, and other supports they need, they help create the protective factors and developmental assets that help children succeed (Bryan & Henry, 2008; Galassi & Akos, 2004). For low-income African American students, caring and supportive relationships with adults in schools is particularly important to their educational success (Williams & Bryan, 2013). School counselors can help promote and develop school-based mentoring programs and family and community volunteer programs to increase the presence of caring
adults in schools. Culturally relevant caring among school staff, mentors, and volunteers is critical to providing students at-risk with caring and trusting relationships.

Counseling as a discipline endorses relationships with faith leaders and healers as a helping strategy (Constantine, Myers, Kindaichi & Moore, 2004). In the context of schools, these relationships are even more important because for students, faith leaders and faith-based organizations serve as an important source of social capital for students and their families (Green-Powell et al., 2011; Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Miller & Engel, 2011).

Despite the important role school counselors can play in forging linkages between schools, families, and community organizations, including faith-based organizations, school counselors may experience personal and professional barriers as they seek to build these partnerships. In a series of studies of school counselors’ involvement in partnerships (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010), results revealed a number of factors that may help or hinder school counselors from building partnerships. Barriers included lack of time and partnership related training, lack of a collaborative school climate, low principal expectations, lack of self-efficacy regarding partnership-building, and counselors’ own role perceptions (Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; 2007; Bryan & Griffin, 2010). Given the value that such partnerships bring to schools, families, and communities, school counselors will need to find ways to traverse the barriers to partnerships. One way they may do this is by using a model of partnership building that increases their efficiency and ability to meet the needs of their students (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

**The Process of Building Partnerships**

A few partnership process models exist to guide persons in building partnerships (Doherty & Mendenhall, 2006; Epstein, 1995; Gray, 1985; Keys, Bemak, Carpenter & King-Sears, 1998; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Waddock, 1989). However, these models were developed for teachers, family therapists, tourism management, business partnerships, and consultants. Schools are in need of fully articulated
partnership models that can be implemented and studied systematically and rigorously, so that programs and results can be replicated in schools nation wide (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Otherwise, schools will continue to implement partnership programs “willy-nilly” and without evidence of outcomes, thus resulting in reduced funding opportunities and support for such programs.

Given the challenges school counselors encounter in building partnerships, a partnership process model was developed specifically to help school counselors navigate the process of building schools (Bryan & Henry, 2012). Bryan and Henry (2012) built on previous models to develop a model (see Figure 2.1) that specifically addressed the barriers, tasks, and questions school counselors face when building partnerships. This model (see Figure 2.1) comprises seven stages: (a) preparing to partner; (b) assessing needs and strengths; (c) coming together; (d) creating a shared vision and plan; (e) taking action; (f) evaluating and celebrating progress; and (g) maintaining momentum. This model is not a linear model, but rather stages overlap and the process is iterative with school counselors recycling through stages of the model and entering the process at different points as needed. Below I describe the stages of the partnership process model that helped guide the partnership relevant to this study.

**Preparing to partner.** School counselors begin partnerships with assessing their attitudes and challenging their assumptions about children and families. This stage allows them to challenge deficit views about children and families and develop strength-based narratives. In addition, during the preparation stage, school counselors must develop a partnership vision and mission that aligns with the vision and mission of the overall school and the school counseling program. Further, school counselors can develop a rationale for building partnerships by disaggregating student outcome data and educating school staff about partnerships and their benefits. The partnership preparation stage provides an opportunity for school counselors to learn more about partnerships through professional development and research so that they develop the self-efficacy to build partnerships.
Assessing needs and strengths. School counselors develop partnerships to meet identified student and family needs and build on student and family strengths. Therefore, needs and strengths assessment is an integral part of the partnership building process. Needs and strengths assessment allows school counselors to identify students’ needs, programs that already exist and are working, and potential cultural brokers and partners that they can work with to meet the needs of students.

Coming together. School counselors are constrained by time and numerous responsibilities (Bryan & Griffin, 2010; Bryan & Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; 2007). Therefore, they cannot build partnerships alone. School counselors should form partnership leadership teams (PLTs) or action teams consisting of the counselor, an administrator, some teachers, family and community members, and even a
couple of students (in the case of middle and high schools) (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010). Working together with a team means that everyone shares the load and that the team can begin to develop a collaborative climate in the school. Together the team can carry out the work of partnership building and creating a shared vision.

**Creating shared vision and plan.** School counselors possess the skills to help the PLT develop a shared vision and plan. Counselors can facilitate dialogue that helps the PLT come to consensus and a shared vision for which student needs they want to target first, the types of partnership programs that will best meet the needs of the students, and the outcomes that they want to measure. A PLT will help partnerships to be built on shared ownership and responsibility and shared goals. Further, the PLT shares the vision with the whole school to get buy-in. Planning is an important aspect of building partnerships. Together the PLT develops short and long-term plans for the partnership programs and develops a logic model to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

**Taking action.** This is the implementation stage of the model. At this stage the PLT is working with each other and other partners (other family and community members and school staff) to implement the partnership programs and activities. This process is ongoing as some activities may be yearlong and continue from year to year while some activities may be short-term and take place at a specific time during the year. The PLT must plan for set backs but recognize that small beginnings can have snowball effects over time. The team’s efforts to develop a shared vision and plan as well as successful delegation will be rewarded at this stage.

**Evaluating and celebrating progress.** Evaluation is an integral part of determining the success of partnerships, yet, frequently partnership programs are not evaluated to determine their impact on students, families, and the school. The PLT should plan for evaluation from the outset, in the creating a shared vision and plan stage, when they are creating the goals and plans for the partnership. School counselors should encourage the PLT to explore and utilize a collaborative model of evaluation (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez R, 2012; Ryan, 2005). In a collaborative model of evaluation,
stakeholders are included in “in defining the purpose of the evaluation, evaluating the program’s quality, interpreting the data, making recommendations, and determining how to disseminate the findings” (Bryan & Henry, 2012, p. 416). Celebrating all partners, that is, all school staff, family members, and community members, who helped plan, implement, and evaluate the partnership programs and activities, is extremely important. Celebrations help to maintain momentum or sustain the partnership.

**Maintaining momentum.** Partnerships are difficult to sustain (Alexander et al., 2003). Many times school-family-community partnerships that seem to benefit students can soon peter out. School counselors and PLTs must plan for the sustainability of school-family-community partnerships. Bryan and Henry (2012) suggest that when the PLT invests in building a strong shared vision and plan in the team and throughout the school; developing shared goals and responsibilities, and identifying potential partners and leaders beyond the team, this will likely increase the partnership’s sustainability. Other important sustainability strategies entail ongoing recruitment of partners and new PLT members as well as planning ahead to keep connections going with existing partners from the school staff, family members, and the community.

**Types of School-Family-Community Partnership Programs**

In a study of an urban elementary school and its partnerships, Sanders and Harvey (2002) found that the wide range of school-family-community partnership activities could be classified as student-centered (mentoring, incentives and awards), family-centered (family-fun and learning nights, parent-education), school-centered (beautification projects, classroom assistance) and community-centered (charitable outreach, beautification of community). One of the focal partnerships existed between the school and a local church that provided school supplies to students in need, and provided refreshments and parties on days such as Valentine’s Day and Christmas parties. These types of school-family-community partnerships are vital for school improvement especially for schools serving ‘at-risk’ students (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Classroom centered partnership programs such as classroom adoption
programs where partners adopt entire classrooms, do not appear to have been a focus in the literature. The partnership literature is also scanty on faith-based partnership programs. In this section, I discuss the literature on some partnership programs, including faith-based programs, which are critical to this dissertation study.

**Mentoring programs.** Mentoring programs typically pair an adult or older peer with a child (mentee) to provide them with supportive, caring relationships. Mentoring programs provide a critical protective factor that fosters resilience and developmental assets for the mentee, a caring adult (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, & McMaken, 2011). School based mentoring is particularly popular with schools with thousands of adult and high-school aged mentors mentoring children in the schools (Karcher & Herrera, 2007). Big Brothers Big Sisters is perhaps the oldest and most popular mentoring program in the U.S.A. (Herera, et al, 2011). Research indicates that when mentoring programs are high quality and lasting, and when mentors are trained, they provide positive academic outcomes for youth (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Harris, 2002; Lerner, Brittian, & Fay, 2007).

School-based mentoring programs provide students with adult mentors who may be school personnel or members from community organizations. School-based mentoring programs are popular with most existing in elementary schools (Rhodes & Dubois, 2006). The focus of mentoring research has focused mostly on the mentor-mentee relationship and match. Karcher, Nakkula and Harris (2005) discuss the importance of training and support for mentors and mentees in order to avoid mentor-mentee matches that fail. Effective mentoring programs should prepare mentors to deal with challenging youth, help would-be mentors reflect on their motivations, and embrace goals that are not focused self-interest in order to avoid disillusionment (Karcher et. al., 2005). Indeed research on the outcomes of mentoring for youth indicate that when mentoring relationships are based on these best practices (e.g., training mentors, mentor support), they result in positive academic and health outcomes for youth (Hansen, 2007; Liang, & Noam, 2006; Rhodes & Dubois, 2006; Rhodes, Spencer, Keller, Steen & Noguera, 2010).
Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), one of the oldest mentoring programs in the U.S. is known because of its positive effects of mentoring. The caring relationships between mentor and mentee produce positive outcomes such as youth engaging in less risky behaviors and improved academic performance (Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 1995). In 2007, BBBS served 126,000 children. In 2009, they served 245,000 children between the school based and the community based programs. An impact study of 1,139 youth in grades 4-9 was carried out to examine the various ways the BBBS program provides benefits to youth (Herrera et al., 2011). Youth improved academically just in the first year but not maintained in the second year. Youth were more positive about their academic abilities and were more likely to report having a “special adult” in their lives. However youth did not improve in classroom effort, global self-worth, or problem behaviors nor did they have improvement in their relationships with parents, teachers or peers (Herrera et al., 2011). An earlier impact study of 1995 found that after 18 months in a BBBS program youth were less likely to start using drugs and alcohol, less likely to hit someone, had improved school attendance and performance, and attitudes toward completing schoolwork, and had improved peer and family relationships (Tierney et al., 1995). Two of the essential benefits of the BBBS programs are that it brings a diverse group of volunteers serving children at-risk, many of whom would not normally have volunteered with these children otherwise. Secondly it provides children with a non-parental adult who can provide youth with the support they need along with having an adult that they can talk to about many issues they face and who they know cares about what happens to them and the choices they make (Herrera, Grossman, Kauh, Feldman & McMaken, 2007).

Mentors can provide both protective and compensatory factors for urban adolescents (Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). A mentor is a significant non-parental figure in an adolescent life that has a positive influence such as teachers, extended family members, neighbors, teachers, coaches, and ministers. Seven hundred and seventy high school adolescents from a large Midwestern city with GPAs of 3.0 or below were interviewed in order to explore the direct and indirect effects and outcomes based on having a mentor in their lives. Having a mentor had a positive effect on
problem behaviors and school attitudes in urban youth. Youth with mentors reported more positive school attitudes than those without. They also reported less marijuana use and fewer non violent delinquent behaviors, more likely to like school, think success in school is important and feel capable of succeeding. Mentors provide adolescence with the protective factors they need to reduce risk and foster resilience.

**Tutoring programs.** Tutoring programs, like mentoring programs, may be school or community based; a volunteer adult or older peer, or a teacher is paired with a child to help the child build academic skills. Tutoring programs have positive effects on academic achievement especially when tutors are trained (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler, & Schumaker, 2001).

There are various type of tutoring programs - volunteer tutoring, peer tutoring, crosseage tutoring and one-on-one tutoring (Ritter, Denny, Albin, Barnett, & Blankenship, 2009). Overall these programs are designed to improve student performance, provide mentorship, improve student self-esteem as well as behavior. Twenty-one studies were reviewed as to the effectiveness of volunteer tutoring programs in improving academic skills of students in grade K-8. These studies showed that structured reading-focused volunteer tutoring had a positive influence on language and reading outcomes for students. Three characteristics of the programs were also reviewed for effectiveness. Type of tutor, age of tutees and highly structured vs. unstructured programs were not significant for effectiveness. Programs varied and the outcome was still positive for academic improvement (Ritter, Denny, Albin, Barnett, & Blankenship, 2009). Students who participate in tutoring offered by volunteers tend to earn higher scores on assessments related to letters and words, oral fluency, and writing as compared to their peers who are not tutored (Ritter, Barnett, Denny, & Albin, 2009).

Tutoring programs may involve skilled teachers or para-educators who provide one-on-one instruction or support to one or more students with the expectation that the student/s will improve on knowledge or skills that they may be lacking (Hock, Pulvers, Deshler & Schumaker, 2001). Hock et. al. describes three types of tutoring models: “instructional tutoring” where the goal is to instruct students in literacy skills such as reading, writing, math, listening and speaking with the intended outcome of
development of skills and knowledge; “assignment-assistance tutoring” where the tutor meets one student or a group of two to six students who have had difficulty working independently on their assignments with the intended outcome is that students do complete the required assignments; and “strategic tutoring” where students while working on assignments are taught strategies for learning and successful performance with the intended outcome is that students apply these skills and strategies on independent assignments and with classroom assignments.

In studying the efficacy of a tutoring program for at-risk students who were failing classes, these authors found that students did better on quizzes and tests after being in the tutoring program although one student who only had 4 out of 12 sessions of tutoring did not perform better academically moving form Fs and Ds to Cs. Tutoring also seemed to have long term effects in that the students who had participated in most of the program still maintained their performance even when they were no longer receiving tutoring. Strategic tutoring was the most effective form of tutoring. I believe that community organizations can bring strategies, skills and approaches that the have learnt in their field as experiences, knowledge and skills to help students with strategic tutoring. One of the students who were not successful in the program said he had no interest in school as he was going to work in a family business. If this tutoring program had incorporated partnerships this student might have become more inspired and motivated to learn to be a successful business person in his family business.

**After-school programs and out-of-school time (OST) activities.** After-school programs are defined as “an array of safe, structured programs that provide children and youth ages kindergarten through high school with a range of supervised activities intentionally designed to encourage learning and development outside of the typical school day” (Little, Wimer & Weiss, 2008, p.2). Other popular names for after-school programs are “out-of-school time” and “school-aged care”. Some of the activities found in after-school programs are academic instruction, tutoring, mentoring, homework assistance, and enrichment activities inclusive of cultural activities, team sports and volunteering and community service. They are ‘Stand Alone’ programs that focus primarily on one type of service such as extended day care
and ‘Broad-based’ programs which provide a combination of services such as academic enrichment and cultural activities (Parsad & Lewis, 2009). After-school programs are usually held after-school on weekends and/or in the summer.

After-school programs provide safe places for children out of school as well as provide adult supervision (Parsad & Lewis. 2009). There are three critical concepts in after-school- safety, positive youth development and academic enrichment and support (Little et. al, 2008) after-school programs have a positive impact on academic achievement not only when they focus on academic activities but also when they offer non-academic activities (Kane 2003).

The Harvard Family Research Project carried out a review of the 10 years of research on the effects of afterschool programs for at-risk students (Little et al., 2008). They found that youth who participate in after-school programs receive positive benefits- academic, social-emotional, prevention and health and wellness. Some of these benefits are better grades, better attitudes towards school and higher aspirations, Improved social and communication skills and/or relationships with others (peers, parents, teachers), decreases in delinquency behavior and violent behavior, and increased knowledge of nutrition and health practices (Little et al., 2008). Some other benefits of after-school programs are increased attendance, improvement in academics, higher rates of graduation and lower dropout rates than students who did not participate in after-school programs (Chicago After-School Matters Program; George, Cusick, Wasserman, & Gladden, 2007).

The Harvard Family Research Project revealed three critical factors that came out of the research literature that are beneficial to creating the settings and developing after-school programs that can achieve positive outcomes. These are (a) access to and sustained participation in the program; (b) quality programming and staffing; and (c) promoting strong partnerships among the program and the other places where students are learning, such as their schools, their families, and other community institutions. This suggests that after-school programs should consider building partnerships that incorporate the school,
family and community. These programs are of higher quality when they involve all stakeholders. The March 2007 Harvard Family Research Project Report on the *Study of Promising Programs* stated

> When all parties with responsibility for and interests in the welfare of youth, especially disadvantaged youth, unite to engage them in high-quality after-school experiences, they are more likely to succeed in promoting positive development for the highest number of children at-risk” (Little et. al, 2008, p.8).

These partnerships are also critical to sustained participation of youth in after-school activities. Examples of strong and effective partnerships are: Transition to Success Pilot Project (i.e., partnering with families), Boys and Girls Clubs (i.e., partnering with community institutions) 21st Century Community Learning Centers (i.e., partnering with schools). The 21st Century Community Learning Centers, a federal funded program calls for schools to build partnerships with community-based organizations and faith-based organizations (Little et. al, 2008).

**Parent and family involvement.** Prior to the 1990’s, educators and researchers referred to what they now call school-family-community partnerships as parent or family involvement (Epstein, 1995; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Whether referred to as partnerships or parent involvement, the literature indicates that parent involvement has a positive effect on student achievement across race, gender or SES (Jeynes, 2003, 2007; Gonzalez, Borders, Hines, Villalba, & Henderson, 2013). Parent involvement means that parents actively participate in the educational processes and experiences of their children. Schools that create programs specifically to involve parental support for their children see a positive relation to student achievement (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). When schools and communities create initiatives to engage low-income parents, these parents develop strengthened competence, skills and make positive changes in their lives (Winter, 1993). School-family-community partnerships can help promote a sense of well being and personal competence in parents (Bryan, 2005). Parents lack of trust, past negative experiences with schools, parents’ experiences of discrimination, and incongruent teacher and parent expectations can deter parents from being involved in schools causing them to feel alienated and
marginalized (Brewster & Railsback, 2003; Noguera, 2003). Schools can be welcoming places for parents through implementation of partnerships moving beyond the traditional role of bake sales and Parent Teacher Associations and embracing families as an equal member of the partnerships and school programs (Bryan, 2005; Bryan & Henry, 2012). Parents are the voices of the community and hence a valuable resource for schools. Schools can implement family centers, parent education and workshops, all as a support for parents and coordinated by them empowering parents to also reach out and help other families. The outcome of parental involvement is that parent’s expectations for their children’s education increases and this expectation is critical to student achievement (i.e. GPA, standardized tests and other academics measures (Jeynes, 2003). Quality partnership programs are directly related to increased parent involvement (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004). To accomplish this quality there needs to be evaluation of partnership programs and this should be significant to schools as it impacts the achievement of all students (Sheldon & Van Voorhis, 2004).

Galindo and Sheldon (2012) believe that home and school are the most influential contexts in a child's life. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory was used to demonstrate how these two systems interact within and between each other in development of children whilst Epstein’s "overlapping spheres of influence" was used to show how family involvement can influence child development. The connection in this study is comparing family involvement and its influence on children’s performance in kindergarten. This study analyzed data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) database focusing on three indicators of family involvement- at home, at school and parents' educational expectations to determine its influence on academic achievement in kindergarten students (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Studies have shown that parent background and attitudes, teacher engagement of parents and school and neighborhood climates all increase family involvement, and these parent-child interactions influence student’s academic achievement (Smith, et al., 1997; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). The hypothesis was that if schools were to reach out to families and help them to become more involved in their children's education in the early years, at home and in school the children would have improved
academic achievement gains. The participants in this study included 16,430 kindergarten students from 870 schools for the math analysis and 15,960 kindergarten students from 860 schools for the reading analysis. The results indicated that school outreach had a positive association with family involvement at school. It was also positive for family involvement at home and parents’ educational expectations, but not statistically significant. Both family involvements at school and parents’ educational expectations were associated with higher gains in math and reading achievement in kindergarten. This article implies that there is a need for schools to include in their school outreach shared information with families about student’s work. This will help parents and school to have consensus about children’s learning giving children the same messages about learning and behavior. Schools need to see family involvement as critical in the early years of a child’s life (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012).

Youngblade et al. (2007) examined family, school and community risk and promotive factors and their association with outcomes of positive and negative adolescent development (Youngblade, et al., 2007). The sample for the study was drawn from the 2003 National Survey of Children’s Health and included 42,305 adolescents ages 11-17. Majority of the adolescents were healthy, with 19% Black, 81% White and 15% Hispanic. 62% of the families had completed their high school education, lived in poverty and lived in 2-parent households.

The results of the study showed that when families are more engaging with adolescents, there is family closeness and communication and parental healthy role modeling, that there are more positive outcomes for adolescents such as social competence, health promoting behaviors and self-esteem. This leads to less externalizing and internalizing behaviors. Family closeness was directly related to fewer academic problems and family communicated was directly related to healthy behaviors. When families were aggressive and parents aggravation it resulted in adolescents having less social competence, less health promoting behaviors, lower self-esteem, and greater externalizing, internalizing and negative academic behavior. When comparing risk and promotive factors in schools and communities, the results of this study supported the principle of PYD in that adolescents who felt safe in their schools and
communities and community connectedness existed, tended to have greater social competence and less externalizing behavior. School violence unsafe neighborhoods had a direct effect on adolescents resulting in negative outcomes such as externalizing behaviors, internalizing behaviors and negative academic behavior and less social competence.

When ecological contexts - school, families and communities provide positive interpersonal connections, safety and modeling of healthy behavior, the results are decreased risky behaviors, fewer academic problems, increased social competence and health promoting behaviors.

**Faith-based partnerships.** Controversial debate continues to exist about whether faith-based organizations can effectively collaborate with schools and other social service and community agencies without proselytizing or compromising their own religious identity (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). Nevertheless, education leaders and policy makers are convinced of the utility and value of faith-based partnerships with schools and communities. Relatedly, in 1995, President Clinton directed the U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, to provide guidelines to schools and faith-based organizations on religious expression in schools in order to increase partnerships between schools and these organizations. In 1995, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, released “*Religious Expression in Public Schools: A Statement of Principles.*” Further, in 1999, Secretary Riley released a number of resources to guide school officials, parents, mentors, and volunteers among them “*How Faith Communities Can Support Children’s Learning in Education*” and on “*Faith Communities Joining with Local Communities to Support Children’s Learning: Good Ideas*” (Riley, Smith, Peterson, & Doyle, 1999).

Future presidencies continued to support faith-based school-family-community partnerships. In 2001, President George Bush launched the Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) to explore ways in which faith based organizations can be mobilized to enhance school and community outcomes (Shirley, 2001). For the first time in 2002, faith-based organizations were allowed to receive funding to help children in failing schools, under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). In 2010, President Obama renamed the FBCI, the Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (FBNP) to
promote a culture of high expectations and student achievement by forging partnerships between schools and community based organizations – secular and non-secular. Education leaders view faith-based organizations as educational insiders rather than outsiders in promoting a community culture where everyone should see themselves as responsible for improving the nation’s lowest achieving schools.

Faith-based organizations partner with numerous state and federal organizations to implement copious programs for at-risk children including summer programs, programs for youth in juvenile justice/correctional centers ((Green-Powell et al. 2011; Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). In a study of 37 faith-based organizations from 22 states to understand how they collaborate with schools and other government agencies to help children at-risk of academic failure, findings reveal a diversity of involvement and influence (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). None of these organizations were the result of federal or state government initiatives, but grew out of the civic commitment of local citizens to helping children (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). These organizations served over 28,000 high-risk children through mentoring, tutoring, after-school, job training, and numerous other programs. Researchers found that these organizations fulfilled a valuable civic purpose, built caring and loving relationships with children, respected the beliefs and values of the children and families regardless of their faith, and were able to respect church-state boundaries while fulfilling numerous social and emotional needs that would otherwise go unmet. In this study the organizations’ leaders were interviewed.

A need exists for research that examines children’s, faith-based volunteer’s, and school personnel’s perspectives about the benefits and challenges of faith-based school-family-community partnerships. There is also a need for research to further clarify the process of implementing these partnerships to understand how these partnerships work best given the boundaries between church/faith-based organization and state.
Outcomes of School-Family-Community Partnerships

Schools, families and communities are considered the “spheres of influence” that overlap in effecting student learning and development. Epstein’s framework of six types involvement that increase family and community involvement in schools are: Type 1, parenting or helping all families establish home environments to support children as students; Type 2, communicating or designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication; Type 3, volunteering or recruiting and organizing families to help the school and support students; Type 4, learning at home or providing families with information and ideas to help students with homework; Type 5, decision making or including parents in school decisions and developing parent leaders; and Type 6, collaborating with the community or identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen schools, students, and families (Epstein, 1995; Sheldon & Epstein, 2002, p. 5)

Sheldon and Epstein (2002) examined elementary and secondary school longitudinal data of schools that participated in the National Network of Partnership Schools, an ongoing project conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University. These schools were studied to examine the effect of partnerships on student behavior. The results of this study showed that when schools implemented activities to increase parent involvement and volunteering and focused on improving the quality of their partnership programs, it reduced the percentages of students who were subject to disciplinary action (i.e. being sent to principals’ offices or given detention or in-school suspension). School-family-community partnerships can be beneficial to improving student behavior and reduce discipline problems (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

One of the characteristics of high performing schools is “high levels of parent and community involvement” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In a study to measure the role of parent and community involvement and it’s influence on student achievement revealed the following outcomes: When parents are involved in their children’s learning (i.e. expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive), students from all backgrounds earn higher grades and
test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs, are promoted and earn credits, attend school regularly, have better social skills and behavior, and adapt well to school, and graduate and go on to postsecondary education. When schools engage families (i.e. responding to their concerns and honor their contributions, meeting face to face, sending materials home and keeping in touch about progress), families have greater connections to the school, students make greater gains, and strong and consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math. When families and communities collaborate (i.e. holding poorly performing schools accountable), schools and communities make positive changes in policy, practice, and resources, upgrade school facilities, improve school leadership and staffing, have higher-quality learning programs for students, provide new resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum and receive funding for after-school programs and family supports. School-family-community partnerships help with school improvement and improved academic achievement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

**Outcomes of Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnerships**

America has the most churches per capita in the world and millions of Americans identify the church as one of the most important influences in their lives (Cnaan, Boddie, & Yancey, 2003; Miller & Engel, 2011). Indeed, churches are critical sources of social capital for families and community residents and act as key influences on social justice issues (Miller & Engel, 2011). However, although, faith-based school-family-community partnerships with schools continue to collaborate with schools and community members to help children at-risk of academic failure, yet little research been conducted about the outcomes of these faith-based partnerships. Most of what has been written emphasizes the importance of linkages between faith-based organizations and schools and the potential of these linkages to promote positive outcomes for children, families, and communities (Green-Powell et al., 2011; Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Miller & Engel, 2011; Roehlkepartain, 2007; Shirley, 2001).

Faith-based partnerships have shown some success in contributing to student achievement in low-income high poverty schools. In a 14-year partnership between a church and an urban PreK-4 school,
researchers discovered they were some key ingredients to a successful partnership (Tripses & Scroggs, 2009). This school, despite a 97.9% poverty rate and a 22.7% mobility rate, made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the last two out of three years. This school-family-community partnership provided a sponsor family for every student in the school from second through fourth grade. It also provided for the school reading, tutoring, mentoring, and enrichment activities that were not available to the children before implementation of the partnership. The key ingredients in this partnership were collaborative leadership—where school, church members and families have shared values of working together, emanating respect for all involved and spirituality (creativity, care and compassion) being a prominent theme; renewed community—providing homes for families in need, advocating for families at the district level and the wider community, shift in perceptions that children in poverty cannot perform well and appreciating the children and families struggle; and poverty resources—church volunteers have been able to provide the resources, social capital, connections and ‘hidden rules of class’ through being directly involved not only in the children’s lives but their families as well. Some of the outcomes of this school-church partnership were moral purpose, collaborative relationships, understanding advocacy, and a new hope not just for children in poverty but a society at-risk. The school was given statewide recognition for student academic achievement and volunteer commitment (Tripses & Scroggs, 2009).

**Significance of the Study**

Despite widespread belief in the value of school-family-community partnerships in many education and community settings, the criticism frequently launched is that partnership programs and practices have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation (Agronick, Clark, O’Donnell, & Steuve, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Few studies have utilized any formal evaluation model or rigorous study design. The field is evolving with increasing calls for empirical research that illuminates what specific aspects and interventions of partnership programs lead to changes in student and school outcomes.
This study evaluated a faith-based school-family-community partnership in an urban elementary school and provided information about student outcomes (i.e., academic, behavior and attendance) of the partnership. This dissertation study also examined various aspects of the partnership program to determine if these aspects had an effect on student outcomes. Further, this dissertation study extended the literature on faith-based partnerships with schools and outcomes. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the faith-based school-family-community partnership comprehensive programs (i.e., adoption, mentoring and rewards), thus increasing knowledge about how faith-based organizations may partner with schools and their potential influences on students.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the study, the research design, and the process of data analysis. The Model of Collaborative Evaluation is first presented followed by the setting, a description of the evaluand—Just Love, and role of the researcher. Participants, measures, procedures and a description of both the quantitative and qualitative analysis are discussed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a faith-based school-family-community partnership—Just Love, between a large suburban church and a Title 1, urban elementary school Charisma ES. This study examined the differences in student outcomes (i.e. academic, behavior and attendance) between Charisma ES and another matching school- Joseph ES without a faith-based school-family-community partnership. These same variables were examined within Charisma ES to determine if Just Love had a potential influence on adopted classrooms compared to non-adopted classrooms and mentored students compared to non-mentored students.

The study also examined the perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations of Just Love through the voices of the children involved in the partnership.

The study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the faith-based school-family-community partnership comprehensive programs (i.e., adoption, mentoring and rewards), thus providing insights about the potential influence of a faith-based partnership on students and their academic-related outcomes and increasing knowledge about faith-based partnerships with schools.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided the evaluation of the Just Love partnership for three academic years, 2010-2013, with 2009 as a baseline year.

Quantitative Research Questions

(1) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership program and a matching school without this program?

(2) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between students in adopted classes and students in non-adopted classes?

(3) a) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between mentored students and students not mentored?

b) What differences exist in attendance rates by years of mentoring?

Qualitative Research Questions

(4) What were students’ perceived satisfactions of the Just Love programs?

(5) What were students’ experiences as a result of the Just Love programs?

(6) What suggestions would participants have regarding how to improve the Just Love programs (challenges, recommendations for improvements)?

Research Design

The evaluation design employed in this study was a mixed method design. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect the data. Table 3.1 contains an overview of the participants, research questions, data collection and analysis procedures. Data collection methods comprised of student
outcome data (academic, behavior and attendance), photo elicitation, and interviews with mentored students. Student outcome data were collected for three years from 2010-2013, with 2009 as a baseline year. The combination of these methods assured dependable feedback because they complemented each other and provided important cross-checks on the evaluation findings.

**Model of Collaborative Evaluation**

A collaborative evaluation is a systematic study designed and implemented to determine the value of an evaluand (i.e., that which is evaluated) - Just Love. It involves a significant degree of collaboration between evaluators and stakeholders (Cousins, Donohue, & Bloom, 1996; Rodriguez-Campos, 2005).

Following the theory that evaluation is a learning tool for improvement, the Model for Collaborative Evaluations (MCE) (Rodriguez-Campos, 2005) was used in this evaluation to actively engage stakeholders during the evaluation process and to answer the evaluation questions (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2012). The MCE is a comprehensive framework for guiding collaborative evaluations in a precise, realistic, and useful manner (Figure 3.1). The interactive steps of MCE are (a) identify the situation, (b) clarify the expectations, (c) establish a collective commitment, (d) ensure open communication, (e) encourage effective practices, and (f) follow specific guidelines (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2013). These steps as they are outlined are the processes by which decision-making takes place throughout the evaluation. They provide a systematic structure for the collaborative evaluation determining stakeholders, roles and activities, threats to the evaluation, handling possible conflicts between collaborative members, decision-making procedures, standards and collaboration guiding principles used in the evaluation. Each of these six steps is broken down into subcomponents that further guide the evaluation and are used as a checklist for the evaluation. These components and subcomponents can be seen Figure 3.1. Each step interacts and influences the other steps. Within the center of the MCE are the stages of the evaluation: planning, executing and reporting. Figure 3.1 demonstrates the steps that were followed in this evaluation study.
Figure 3.1. Model for Collaborative Evaluations (MCE)

Model for Collaborative Evaluation (MCE) Terms

Here are some definitions of terms important to the collaborative evaluation (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2012).

Stakeholders. These are persons who are interested in the collaborative evaluation because they may be directly or indirectly affected by results. In this evaluation the stakeholders were the Principal of Charisma ES, and the faith-based organization leader. Other stakeholders included administration, students, teachers and other leaders of Charisma ES, social worker and the principal of Joseph ES as well as the Henry School District.
Collaboration Members (CMs). These are specific individuals who work jointly with the evaluators to help with particular tasks in order to achieve the evaluation vision (Rodriguez-Campos, 2005). For the purpose of this evaluation CMs included Charisma ES’s principal, reading coach, assistant principal, school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, and the social worker of Joseph E.S., the matching school. All CMs discussed the type of data that would be best used for the evaluation. Each member had specific roles in the evaluation.

Evaluator. I was the evaluator and researcher for this study, which meant that I was responsible for the overall evaluation and its results, employing defensible criteria to judge the evaluand value.

Evaluation standards. These are the commonly agreed-upon principles of professional practice in the conduct and use of the evaluation, that when implemented will lead to greater evaluation quality. (JCSEE, 2011)

Collaboration guiding principles. These are established principles that guide the professional practice of collaborators (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2013).

The Setting

Charisma ES is an urban elementary school and is identified as a Title 1 school because 99% of the children qualify for free and reduced lunch. The student population of approximately 621 students, Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) through fifth grade, comes from one of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in Tampa, FL. Daily the children at Charisma ES face poverty, homelessness, and live in neighborhoods challenged by crime, violence and drugs. These put the children at a greater risk of academic failure.

The Program / Evaluand: Just Love

The partnership program evaluated (evaluand) was called Just Love, a faith-based school-family-community partnership formed in collaboration with a large suburban church and Charisma ES. The
vision of the partnership was to have the volunteers provide love, care, supportive adult relationships and service to the teachers, students, and parents of Charisma ES through a three pronged program: **Just Mentor** (a school-based mentoring program), **Just Connect** (i.e. a classroom adoption program), and **Just Rewards** (a school wide student incentives/rewards and parent involvement program).

**Just Mentor.** This was a school-based *mentoring* program that provided an adult mentor to one student, one hour per week on school grounds. The mentor acted as an adult role model in the student’s life, establishing relationship and serving as a source of encouragement for academic, personal and social success.

Teachers chose children to be mentored who were at greater risk for failure. These were the students who had academic, behavior or attendance challenges as well as faced some form of adversity. The school counselor in collaboration with the teacher placed these children on a list in order of priority for mentoring. The Just Love volunteers who desired to mentor filled out an application as well as a mentor survey on their own background and interests. After completing a background check required by the faith-based organization and a required school background check, they were then trained for mentoring.

The school counselor matched the mentor using their survey with a child on the priority list. Male mentors were matched with male mentees and female mentors were matched with female mentees. Matching only took once parental permission was obtained. Mentors were asked to commit to mentoring for at least one year to help maintain consistency in the mentee’s life. They also had to be people who could be trusted and whom the children felt safe around. The mentor leader followed up with the mentors periodically to assist them as needed. If a mentee shared anything that could be harmful to himself or herself or another person the mentor was trained to consult with the school counselor, school psychologist, social worker or an administrator. Parents could choose to have their students to opt out of the mentorship program knowing that the school counselor would provide alternative options. Presently there are 32 children mentored through Just Love.
**Just Connect.** This was a *classroom adoption* program, wherein a small group from within the faith-based organization adopted a classroom teacher and the students and families in that teacher’s classroom. This group of volunteers provided classroom support by offering volunteer assistance at the teacher’s request such as reading to students, building the class library, chaperoning field trips, supplying classroom and student supplies as needed, providing birthday and Christmas gifts, and meeting any other teacher, student and family needs.

Just Love volunteers all completed a background check required by the faith-based organization and a required school background check and were trained on district and the partnership policies before being allowed to volunteer at Charisma ES. Teachers of Charisma ES who had a desire to have their classroom adopted filled out a classroom needs assessment survey. These surveys were used in matching volunteers for classroom adoption. Teachers could opt out to being adopted and choose to have mentors only. Presently 15 out of the 33 classrooms have been adopted.

**Just Rewards.** This was a *school wide student incentive/enrichment* program, wherein the program provided incentives for students to come to school on time and on a daily basis. They provide haircuts, birthday celebrations, back to school supplies, uniforms, beautification, covering for courtyard. The Just Rewards also provided enrichment for students, such as ballet and karate lessons, and parent/family incentives and activities to encourage parents to take an active involvement in their children’s education such as education workshops for parents/guardians, community fairs, family assistance (e.g. losing home to a fire, hurricane damage) and a Parent Store to provide parents with things they may not be able to acquire with food stamps. All volunteers completed a background check required by the faith-based organization and a required school background check and were trained on district and the partnership policies before being allowed to volunteer at Charisma ES. Presently they are over 300 volunteers serving in the program.

The Bryan and Henry (2012) School-Family-Community Partnership Process Model was used in developing Just Love. Before initiating any programs, Just Love met with the leaders of the faith-based
organization, the school principal, teachers, parents and students. The partnership vision was aligned with the vision of Charisma ES. Together the leaders of Charisma ES and the leaders of Just Love assessed the major needs of the school. They made a decision to provide mentorship, classroom adoption and rewards through collaborative effort and a shared vision. Before initiating these programs the principal came to the church to share her vision for the school. After this a Partnership Leadership Team was formed (PTL) which included volunteer leaders from the faith-based organization, the principal, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, reading coach (teacher) and a parent from Charisma ES. Various team members from the PLT were assigned to coordinate various components of the program. For example, the volunteer mentor leader trained mentors and collaborated with the school counselor in matching mentor to mentee. A shared vision and plan was decided upon by the PLT.

In all of these programs, volunteers were trained about the policies and procedures of the school and the district. They were instructed about the types of activities that would be acceptable in the school relevant to the various programs. All volunteers completed an application, which included a required background check for the faith-based organization, and a required school background check before they performed any activities in the school. Teachers and staff were involved in the planning and implementation of the partnership beforehand and were also trained to be ready for the partnership each year. Each year the program was evaluated to determine success of the partnership components and to make improvement for the coming school year. Celebrations were held each year to celebrate the progress and accomplishments of all partners involved in the partnership. Mentors, parents and mentees attended a dinner together. Classroom volunteers celebrated with the children and teacher in the classroom. There was a whole school celebration including teachers, parents, and Just Love volunteers held at the beginning of each school year to start off the year and keep the momentum going.
Role of the Researcher

As the researcher and evaluator, I was also a previous employee/school counselor of Charisma ES. I was also a member of the faith-based organization. As the school counselor in this urban elementary school from 2007-2009, working with over 500 children with multiple and complex needs, my heart was saddened that I alone could not meet the complex needs of all children. I knew that Charisma ES students had the potential to have success but they lacked many of the resources and support that were available to children in more middle class and affluent schools.

In 2007, I formed the Caring and Responsive Educators (CARE) Team. This team consisted of the social worker, school psychologist, an administrator and myself, school counselor. We met weekly identifying the needs of children and possibilities of services we could offer to children. I always felt there was more we could do because many of our students children were not having needs met and therefore began to pursue outside partners as recommended by Bryan (2005) in her article: “Fostering educational resilience trough building school-family-community partnerships”. Many times people build partnerships but do not necessarily create access to resources, information, opportunities and support for children and families. The partnerships I would establish had to create this access for all of the children. We can actively make a difference in children’s lives when we are intentional.

In 2010, after meeting with the leaders of the faith-based organization and asking them to consider partnering with Charisma ES, I set up a meeting with the principal of Charisma ES and the faith partner leader. Together they assessed the major needs of the school, identified gaps and made a decision to provide mentorship, classroom adoption and rewards through collaborative effort and a shared vision. Soon after a Partnership Leadership Team (PLT) was formed with the goal of creating a partnership that met the needs of all children through multi systemic programs. This partnership was called Just Love and was established for the 2010-2011 school year.

I coordinated Just Love for the last four years, 2010-2014. I established and trained leaders to train the volunteers on the policies and procedures of the school and the district and the types of activities
that would be acceptable in the school relevant to the various programs. All volunteers completed an application, which included a required background check from the faith-based organization and a required school background check, before they could perform any activities in the school. I trained the teachers and staff on the partnership process and involved them in the planning and implementation of the partnership.

**Researcher Bias**

I have a vested interest in the Just Love partnership and am still very passionate about the work carried out at Charisma ES. They were increased opportunities for biases in this study as the researcher, myself, was a prior employee of Charisma ES, and the students and stakeholders were familiar with me plus I am a member of the faith-based organization. Recognizing how close I am to the Just Love partnership and how my own experiences could influence the data analysis and interpretation of findings I put some things in place to guard against researcher bias. To decrease biases interviews specific steps were put in place to ensure rigor, credibility and trustworthiness. A university research assistant who had no connections at all to Just Love conducted the interviews. The transcriber also had no connections to Just Love. Once the interviews were transcribed, two researchers coded the data for inter-coder reliability. To control for potential biases I also engaged in peer debriefing throughout the process by meeting with both a photo elicitation expert and a qualitative expert, consulting at three different points in the data analysis. A reflexivity journal was used to keep a log of notes and reflections and journal through the data collection and analysis processes. This journal helped me to become aware of my biases. Additionally, the process of collaborative evaluation involved both collaboration members and stakeholders who were able to challenge my assumptions and help keep me an objective view of the data.
Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985), describe trustworthiness as a process used in qualitative analysis that establishes credibility. The results of the research are a match with the perspective of the participant. In this member checking and triangulation of data was used to establish credibility.

Member checking with children. Member checking was carried out in order to establish credibility by eliciting children’s feedback from the interviews (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011; Harper & Cole, 2012). The final categories, themes and codes were shared with the children along with supporting excerpts. Children affirmed the views, feelings and experiences that reflected their perceptions and shared any additional views they had that were not reflected. These very few additional views from the children fit within the already defined themes. For example if the original excerpt stated that the children gave thank you letters to the volunteer, an additional view children made during member checking was that they were the ones who actually typed these letters.

Triangulation of the data. Data and results from a previous study (Henry, Wu, & Bryan, 2012), examining the perceptions of teachers and volunteers involved in Just Love at Charisma ES were used to triangulate the data. Creswell (2002) describes triangulation:

Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection. This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information is not drawn from a single source, individual or process of data collection. In this way it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (p. 280).

The voices of the children were triangulated with the responses of teachers and volunteers regarding their perceptions of the impact of Just Love on Charisma ES.

Participants

For the quantitative aspect of this study, the participants were students (referred to as students, children or mentees throughout the study) in Pre-K through grade 5 at Charisma ES. For the qualitative
aspect of the study, that is, for the photo elicitation interviews, participants were students who had been mentored by Just Love volunteers anytime between 2010 and 2013. They had at some time experienced all aspects of the Just Love school-family-community partnership (i.e., mentored, classroom adoption, and the school wide rewards program). Joseph ES was chosen as a matching school to compare to Charisma ES. However, students at Joseph ES did not participate in the Just Love school-family-community partnership and even although school data was used as a comparison of the school, the children at Joseph ES did not participate in the study.

Joseph ES was the closest matched school in Henry District to Charisma ES on school demographics and was therefore used as the comparison school in this study (see Figure 4.1). The race/ethnicity of Charisma ES was 2.8% White, 85.7% Black, 8.9% Hispanic, 1.9% Multiracial and 0.7% of other races. The student body of Joseph ES was 1.5% White, 88.4% Black, 8.2% Hispanic, 1.6% Multiracial and 0.3% of other races. Charisma ES had a total of 621 students for the 2013-2014 year, with 98% on free and reduced lunch while Joseph ES had a total of 669 students with 99% on free and reduced lunch. The student body of Charisma ES comprised of 325 females and 296 males whilst the student body of Joseph ES comprised 305 females and 364 males.

**Inclusion Criteria**

Student outcome data were collected only from students who have attended Charisma ES or Joseph ES. For the photo elicitation interviews, the 20 mentored students must have attended Charisma ES and have been mentored prior to the study or were currently being mentored at the school by Just Love.

**Exclusion criteria.** Students who do not attend Charisma ES or Joseph ES School were excluded. This study is related to "Just Love" which took place at Charisma ES and Joseph ES is the only matching school in the Henry district that can be compared to Charisma ES.
Measures

Quantitative Measures

Dependent variables. The student outcomes in this study were academic achievement, behavior, and attendance. These outcomes (i.e., archival student outcome data) were collected for both Charisma ES and Joseph ES.

Academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured by standard reading scores on the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) tests for assessment periods one (AP1) and three (AP3) during the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years. Baseline year data, 2009-2010, were not available for the FAIR. Standard scores were available for third through fifth grade students, the grades to which the FAIR is administered. These scores compare the performance of the student to a representative sample of other students in the same grade in Florida who took the test at approximately the same time. The standard score is standardized to have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15.

FAIR reading scores were collected for students at both Charisma ES and Joseph ES. Scores were also compared for students in adopted and non-adopted classrooms, and for mentored and non-mentored students from 2010, when the Just Love partnership program was implemented, through 2013.

Behavior. Behavior was measured by the variables: (1) total number of discipline referrals per school and (2) total number of students who received discipline referrals. These data were available for the 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years for Kindergarten through fifth grades. The 2009-2010 data were used as baseline data. Charisma ES and Joseph ES, adopted and non-adopted classes, and mentored and non-mentored students were compared on total number of discipline referrals and total number of students who received discipline referrals.

Attendance. Attendance was measured by average attendance rates for each classroom, Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grades, for three years 2010-2013. Charisma ES and Joseph ES, adopted and non-adopted classes, and mentored and non-mentored students were compared on average attendance
rates. In addition, attendance rates one year prior to mentoring and attendance rates the last year of mentoring were examined to see if attendance rates differed based on the number of years of mentoring.

**Independent variables.** The independent variables in this study were all grouping variables each with two categories. The first variable comprised the matching schools, Charisma ES and Joseph ES. The second variable comprised two groups: adopted and non-adopted classrooms. The third variable also comprised two groups: mentored and non-mentored students.

**Years of mentoring.** Years of mentoring were the number of years that 20 mentored students who were selected for interviews had been mentored. Years of mentoring ranged from one to three years.

**Qualitative Measures**

**Photo elicitation.** Data were collected from mentored students in Charisma ES using photo elicitation including picture selection and interviews (DeMarie, 2010; Harper, 2002). Photo elicitation is a method that involves the insertion of photographs into a research interview (Harper, 2002). The pictures act as retrieval cues for the children (Harper, 2002). The process elicits richer descriptions during the interview and is not constrained by the influence of the researcher (DeMarie, 2010). Harper (2002) describes photo elicitation, “Photographs appear to capture the impossible: a person gone; an event past. That extraordinary sense of seeming to retrieve something that has disappeared belongs alone to the photograph, and it leads to deep and interesting talk” (p.23). The rationale for using photo elicitation is that verbal reports alone can underestimate young children’s perceptions (Flavell, Miller, & Miller, 2002). This method allows for framing of a person’s world view without constraints of the experimenter’s ideas (Ziller, 1990).

**Picture selection.** Selected photos taken by the Just Love participants (teachers and/or volunteers) were organized for students to discuss during interviews. The selected photos were chosen from the classrooms that were adopted as these teachers and volunteers had pictures that represented the comprehensive program. Each of these teachers were asked to choose 10 pictures that represented Just
Love and at least one of those photos was to include a child who was currently being mentored. The researcher labeled and numbered each picture (1-12) by giving each picture a description of what the picture represented. For example: “Haircuts for School”. Children were not shown the labels. The 12 pictures (see Table 3.1) were laid out on the table before each interview, and in the same order for each child. The only pictured that differed each time was picture number 12. Picture number 12 was a picture of the child being interviewed and his or her mentor.

Table 3.1. Description and Order of Pictures for Photo Elicitation and Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptions and Order of Pictures for Photo Elicitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Field Trip (Zoo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Christmas Gifts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Back to School Supplies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All Pro Dad's &amp; IMom's Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Haircuts for School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Great American Teach In (Career Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Thanksgiving Feast (Classroom Activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Community Fair (Face Painting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pajamas Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tea Party (Classroom Activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Field Day (Sports Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mentor and Mentee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews.** Data were collected from students using photo elicitation including picture selection and interviews (DeMarie, 2010; Harper, 2002). Specific questions were asked during the interview to determine student’s perception, experiences, challenges and recommendations for the Just Love programs. The Just Love Photo Elicitation Interview Protocol (see Appendix A) was developed to use with picture selection. Each interview question was designed to answer the research questions, capturing participant’s perceptions of the Just Love program. The questions were open-ended to allow for children’s voices to be
heard. The interviewer made notes when children made motions with their heads (i.e. nodded yes or no) or pointed at a picture. These notes were inserted in transcripts.

**Procedures/Data Collection**

**Quantitative Procedures**

The CMs met to outline the best way to capture the data for academic achievement, behavior and attendance for both Charisma ES and Joseph ES. An excel document called a dissertation capture sheet was devised to be used for data collection. The student data was collected from Charisma ES, Joseph ES and Henry School District. An aggregate of the data was received with all individual educational data anonymized. Data were received in a locked file requiring a password to maintain confidentiality at all times.

All CMs of the evaluation team convened to discuss the data and analysis. Student outcome records were reviewed for the evaluation. The analysis results were reviewed to determine if there were differences in student outcomes between the two schools, adopted and non-adopted classrooms and mentored and non-mentored students. Joseph ES was offered training of teachers, staff and volunteers on how to implement school-family-community partnerships in return for allowing the evaluator to use their student outcome data. This is scheduled to take place at the beginning of the upcoming school year.

**Qualitative Procedures**

**Picture selection.** For the method of photo elicitation, the twelve selected photos were chosen from the six classrooms that were adopted since 2010 as the teachers and volunteers from these classrooms had pictures that represented the program for three years (2010-2013). Each of these teachers were asked to choose ten pictures that represented Just Love and at least one of those photos were to include a child who was currently being mentored. The teachers were not interviewed. They were only asked to identify pictures to be used later in the photo-elicitation protocol in student interviews. Example
of a photo could be a field trip sponsored by Just Love or a classroom activity coordinated by the volunteers. Once these pictures were collected, one of the CMs sorted the sixty pictures received to avoid duplication of pictures that had the same representation (e.g., Christmas Gifts). Table 3.2 shows how the twelve selected pictures for photo elicitation were labeled with a number and description. The researcher labeled and numbered each picture (1-12) by giving each picture a description of what the picture represented. For example picture number 5 was labeled “Haircuts for schools”. The only pictured that differed each time was picture number 12. Picture number 12 was a picture of the child being interviewed and his or her mentor. These 12 selected pictures were used when interviewing the children. Numbering and labeling of each picture was used to standardize the order for which the pictures were presented to each child. However students were not shown the labels.

**Photo elicitation and interview.** As the evaluator, I met with the university research assistant, prior to conducting interviews. The interviewer was trained on conducting interviews with the children and a pilot interview was conducted before beginning interviews with the selected mentored participants. This interview was recorded and transcribed and then, shared with an expert in photo elicitation to discuss the pilot interview to ensure the mentees understood the pictures and questions and the interview questions were answering the evaluation questions before continuing the study. No interview questions were changed, but one of the photos was replaced as it too dark to see clearly and the child had difficulty understanding the picture.

The twenty mentored students were only interviewed after receiving signed parent consent forms. The interviewer laid out the 12 pictures on a table in order (see Table 3.2), where the mentee would be seated. She then introduced herself to the mentee and began the photo elicitation process using the Just Love Photo Elicitation Interview Protocol (see Appendix A). The questions asked of the children were to capture their voices as they shared their perceived satisfactions, experiences and recommendation for Just Love. The interviewer began the interview by first telling the children:
Hello,
I would like to create a book called “The Story of Just Love Through the Voices of the Children” and I need your help. I would like you to choose pictures to place in this book. Therefore I will ask you some questions that will help tell the story of “Just Love”.

She then asked the mentee two questions before photo elicitation:

1. Tell me what do you know about “Just Love”.
2. What do you like about “Just Love”?

After the mentee answered these two questions they were then asked questions four and six which required them to look at all of the pictures and say which picture they thought Best Showed what “Just Love” was like. They were then asked to give the picture to the interviewer. The interviewer then asked the mentee to tell her about the picture. The child was asked to select the picture that Best Showed “Just Love” and talk about the picture until they had chosen all twelve pictures. Mentees were then asked:

5. Of all of these pictures which one is most important to you? What make this one so important to you?
6. Tell me about your mentor. Tell me what things you did with your mentor. Tell me what you like about having a mentor.

After the photo elicitation, the mentee was asked additional questions:

7. Tell me what the “Just Love” volunteers do with you at school.
8. Tell me about some of the things “Just Love” volunteers gave you.
9. What is your favorite thing to do that is a part of “Just Love”?
10. What is your classroom like since “Just Love” came to your school?
11. What is the school like since “Just Love” came to your school?
12. Is there anything you did not like about “Just Love”?
13. If you could change anything about “Just Love” what would you change?
14. Would you like to continue being a part of the “Just Love” programs? Why?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about “Just Love”?

The evaluator supported the interviewer by being available outside the interview room in case any of the children or interviewer needed counseling or debriefing after discussing the photos. This service was not needed after any of the interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed without student’s names on them. The book referred to in the interviews “The Story of Just Love Through the Voices of the Children” will actually be prepared and donated to the school.
Data Analysis (Mixed Methods)

Quantitative Analysis

Table 3.2 provides a summary of the research questions, independent and dependent variables and data analysis procedures for each question. The quantitative analyses were addressed both descriptively and inferentially.

What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership program and a matching school without this program? Prior to comparing mean differences between Charisma ES and Joseph ES on academic, behavior and attendance outcomes, descriptives such as means and standard deviation were examined for each outcome.

Academic. Three mixed ANOVAs were conducted to examine the mean differences between Charisma ES and Joseph ES (two independent groups) in reading scores on the FAIR for each assessment period (AP1 and AP3). The assessment periods (AP1 and AP3 were the repeated measure. One mixed ANOVA was done for each school year from 2010-2012.

Mixed ANOVA. A Mixed ANOVA (also known as a split-plot ANOVA) is an analysis of variance model that compares differences between two or more independent groups (between subjects variable) on a repeated measure variable (within subjects variable). The assumption of sphericity is often violated in mixed ANOVAs. Therefore, the Huynh-Feldt F-statistic was used to assess within-subject differences. The Huynh-Feldt adjusts the degrees of freedom for the repeated measures variable to adjust for departures from sphericity.

Discipline. Discipline referrals were not provided as student level data, but as total number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals for the whole school. Therefore, all analyses were descriptive in nature. To compare Charisma ES and Joseph ES on number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals, averages were calculated for each year from 2009-2013 by dividing the total number of discipline referrals and the number of students who received
referrals in each school by the total number of students in that school for each year. The average number of discipline referrals and the average number of students who received referrals were compared across schools.

**Attendance.** A mixed ANOVA was also conducted to compare mean differences between Charisma ES and Joseph ES (two independent groups) in attendance rates from 2009-2013. The attendance rates for each year were the repeated measure.

**What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between students in adopted classes and students in non-adopted classes?**

**Academic.** Three mixed ANOVAs were conducted to compare the mean differences between adopted and non-adopted classes (two independent groups) at Charisma ES on reading scores on the FAIR for each assessment period (AP1 and AP3). The assessment periods (AP1 and AP3) were the repeated measure. One mixed ANOVA was done for each school year from 2010-2012.

**Behavior.** Discipline referrals were not provided as student level data, but as total number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals for the whole school. Therefore, all analyses were descriptive in nature. To compare adopted and non-adopted classes on number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals, number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals, averages were calculated for each year from 2010-2013 by dividing the total number of discipline referrals and the number of students who received referrals by the number of adopted classes/non-adopted classes for each year. The average number of discipline referrals and the average number of students who received referrals were compared between adopted and non-adopted classrooms.

**Attendance.** A mixed ANOVA was also conducted to compare mean differences between adopted and non-adopted classes (two independent groups) at Charisma ES in attendance rates from 2010-2013. The attendance rates for each year were the repeated measure.

**What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between**
mentored students and students not mentored?

**Academic.** Three mixed ANOVAs were conducted to compare the mean differences between mentored and non-mentored students (two independent groups) at Charisma ES on reading scores on the FAIR for each assessment period (AP1 and AP3). The assessment periods (AP1 and AP3 were the repeated measure. One mixed ANOVA was done for each school year from 2010-2012. All mentored students in 3rd through 5th grades were compared to all non-mentored students in 3rd through 5th grades.

**Behavior.** Discipline referrals were not provided as student level data, but as total number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals for the whole school. Therefore, all analyses were descriptive in nature. To compare mentored and non-mentored student on number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals, number of discipline referrals and number of students who received referrals, averages were calculated for each year from 2010-2013 by dividing the total number of discipline referrals and the number of students who received referrals by the number of mentored/non-mentored students for each year. The average number of discipline referrals and the average number of students who received referrals were compared between mentored and non-mentored students. All mentored students in K through 5th grades were compared to all non-mentored students in K through 5th grades.

**Attendance.** Three Paired T-tests was also conducted to compare mean differences between mentored and non-mentored students (two independent groups) at Charisma ES in attendance rates from 2010-2013. The attendance rates for each year were the repeated measure. To choose non-mentored students to compare with mentored students on attendance data, propensity score matching (using nearest neighbor matching) was used to match each mentored student for the three academic years 2010-2013 to a non-mentored student with similar characteristics in Charisma ES. Propensity score matching relevant to this study, is the probability that a mentored student closely matches a non-mentored student.
Table 3.2. Quantitative Research Questions, Measures, Data Collection and Data Analysis Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Data Analyses Procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences between schools (for each year, 2010-2013 with baseline year 2009)</td>
<td>School (Charisma ES, Joseph ES)</td>
<td>Academic scores (3rd-5th grades)</td>
<td>Descriptives, Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3 Behavior (K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Total number of discipline referrals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Total number of students who received discipline referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance rates (Pre-K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Average attendance rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean differences between adopted &amp; non-adopted (for each year, 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Group (Adopted, non-adopted)</td>
<td>Academic scores (3rd-5th grades)</td>
<td>Descriptives, Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Classrooms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3 Behavior (K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Total number of discipline referrals</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Total number of students who received discipline referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance rates (Pre-K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Average attendance rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean differences between mentored &amp; non-mentored (for each year, 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Group (Mentored, non-mentored)</td>
<td>Academic scores (3rd-5th grades)</td>
<td>Descriptives, Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Groups); Paired T-tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3 Behavior (K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Total number of discipline referrals</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Total number of students who received discipline referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance rates (Pre-K – 5th grades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Average attendance rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean differences prior to and during mentoring by years of mentoring</td>
<td>Number of years mentored</td>
<td>Attendance rates</td>
<td>Descriptives,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Average attendance rates the year prior to mentoring;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Average attendance rates during last year of mentoring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Matching of red and non-mentored students was done based on grade level, exceptional student education (ESE) status (i.e., disability or gifted status), race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (i.e., free or reduced lunch), and English Language Learner (ELL) status. After matching, paired or dependent t-tests were
done to compare mean differences in attendance rates between mentored and non-mentored students.

Students were matched at scores between 0.8 and 1.

**Propensity score matching.** A propensity score is the conditional probability that a person will be in one condition rather than in another (e.g., get a treatment rather than be in the control group, receive mentoring vs. not receive mentoring) given a set of observed covariates used to predict the person’s condition (Luellen, Shadish & Clarke, 2005). The propensity score ranges from 0 to 1.

**Attendance and years of mentoring.** To determine whether attendance rates differed by years of mentoring, mean differences in attendance rates between the years prior to beginning mentoring and during mentoring (i.e., the last year of mentoring) were calculated. Mean differences in attendance rates were then compared by number of years of mentoring. Small sample sizes did not allow for correlation or inferential analyses.

**Qualitative Analysis**

**What were students’ perceived satisfactions, experiences and recommendations for improvement of Just Love?**

The responses from the participant’s (mentees) photo elicitation interviews were recorded. Their responses were then transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, 2012). An analysis of patterns that emerged from the pictures used in the photo elicitation process was also presented.

Thematic analysis was conducted in six phases. These phases were a) familiarize yourself with your data, b) generate initial codes, c) search for themes d) review themes e) define and name themes f) report the results (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest, 2012).

**Phase 1 – Familiarize yourself with the data.** A first pass was taken at reading the transcripts for a general overview of listening to the children’s voices. An active reading and re-reading of the
transcripts took place in order to become familiar with what the data entailed, paying specific attention to
the meanings and patterns that occurred. Using tracking within each transcript, chunks of text were
highlighted for coding as representative of children’s ideas and perceptions. Preliminary “start codes”
were noted in a reflexivity journal along with detailed notes describing each code and its source.

**Phase 2 – Generate initial codes.** Documenting where and how patterns occurred and reoccurred
was used to generate the initial codes in a systematic format. Going back and forth between the data was
helpful to determine meaningful patterns. Using data reduction, the data were collapsed into categories in
order to make them manageable for more efficient analysis. These categories were a compilation of
common codes while retaining richness of the data. Data complication was also used in this phase by
connecting the categories and codes taking into consideration the research questions and conceptual
framework. A codebook was developed, by making inferences about what the codes, how and why codes
were combined, and how codes were related.

**Phase 3 – Search for themes.** Using the codebook transcripts were re-read applying codes from
the codebook as well as looking for any additional codes. Codes were combined into over-arching
themes by identifying relationships between the codes within categories to more accurately depict the data.

**Phase 4 – Review themes.** Categories, themes and codes were placed in a visual format in order
to examine them as an overall picture. Questions were asked about the data to determine which themes
worked or did not work and whether there was any data missing from the analysis.

Questions such as the following were asked of the data such as (a) What does this theme mean?
(b) What are the assumptions underpinning it? (c) What are the implications of this theme? (d) What
conditions are likely to have given rise to it? (e) Why do people talk about this thing in this particular way
(as opposed to other ways)? and (f) What is the overall story the different themes reveal about the topic?
Each theme was examined in terms of how they supported the data and the overarching theoretical
perspective. A thematic map was developed.
Phase 5 – Define and name themes. At this phase each theme was defined. Transcripts were reread along with research questions. Codes were reviewed. All of these processes were to determine if the codes were placed under the correct themes and if those themes were placed under the appropriate categories. It was important to go beyond surface meanings of the data and to ensure that the combination of categories, themes and codes were telling an accurate story of the data.

Phase 6 – Report the results. This was the final stage of the thematic analysis. An overview of each category was described and each theme explained in a narrative format including excerpts as evidence of children’s voices as it related to the themes.

Analysis of Patterns that Emerged from the Pictures Used in the Photo Elicitation Process

Picture most important to children. Children were asked the interview question: “Of all of these pictures which one is most important to you? What make this one so important to you?” Children’s responses were analyzed as to the percentage of students choosing each picture. The picture that was the most important to children was used to explore what children saw as being significant and satisfying relevant to Just Love. It also revealed experiences children had that were of importance to them as a result of Just Love.

The top three pictures that best shows Just Love to children. Children were asked in the interview to choose a picture that best shows Just Love in the order- numbers 1-12. The interview question was stated: “Look at all of these pictures. Which picture do you think best shows what “Just Love” is like. Now give that picture to me. Tell me about the picture.” The pictures that children chose first as best shows Just Love were analyzed relative to children’s perceptions of Just Love. The percentage of times each picture was chosen by a child was calculated. The three top pictures that best showed Just Love were used to determine if there was a connection between the pictures chosen and children’s perceptions. This allowed to researcher to look for commonalities related to children’s perception of Just Love.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

This dissertation study had both a quantitative and qualitative focus. Both the quantitative and qualitative results play an equal and integral role in evaluating the influence of the Just Love school-family-community partnership program on the students at Charisma Elementary School. This chapter presents the results of the study. The results from the quantitative analyses are presented under Quantitative Findings and describe the academic, behavior, and attendance differences between Charisma Elementary School and a matching school, Joseph Elementary School. The quantitative analyses also describe the academic, behavior, and attendance differences between students in adopted and non-adopted classrooms and between mentored and non-mentored students at Charisma ES. The quantitative research questions were answered with descriptive statistics, paired T-tests, and mixed ANOVAs. The results from the qualitative analyses are presented under Qualitative Findings and describe students’ perceived satisfactions, experiences, and recommendations for the Just Love partnership program implemented at Charisma ES. The qualitative research questions were answered using thematic coding to analyze the transcribed data from the interviews and the pictures used in the photo-elicitation process. Thematic analysis focused on capturing the voices of the students. The categories and themes, which emerged from the thematic data analysis of qualitative data, are discussed so as to preserve the voices of the children. Patterns that emerged from the pictures that were used to elicit the children’s experiences, satisfactions, and recommendations for Just Love are also discussed to answer question 4, 5, and 6.
Research Questions

The following research questions guided the evaluation of the Just Love partnership for three academic years, 2010-2013, with 2009 as a baseline year.

Quantitative Research Questions

1. What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership program and a matching school without this program?

2. What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between students in adopted classes and students in non-adopted classes?

3. a) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between mentored students and students not mentored?

   b) What differences exist in attendance rates by years of mentoring?

Qualitative Research Questions

4. What were students’ perceived satisfactions of the Just Love programs?

5. What were students’ experiences as a result of the Just Love programs?

6. What suggestions would participants have regarding how to improve the Just Love programs (challenges, recommendations for improvements)?

Demographic and Background Information

Participants in this study, who experienced the Just Love school-family-community partnership, were students at Charisma Elementary School. Students in the matching school, Joseph Elementary School, did not participate in the Just Love school-family-community partnership. Joseph Elementary School was the closest matched school in Henry District to Charisma Elementary on school demographics. The schools were matched on school demographics (see Figure 4.1). The race/ethnicity of Charisma Elementary School was 2.8% White, 85.7% Black, 8.9% Hispanic, 1.9% Multiracial and 0.7% of other
races. The student body of Joseph Elementary School was 1.5% White, 88.4% Black, 8.2% Hispanic, 1.6% Multiracial and 0.3% of other races. Charisma Elementary School had a total of 621 students for the 2013-2014 year, with 98% on free and reduced lunch while Joseph Elementary School had a total of 669 students with 99% on free and reduced lunch. The student body of Charisma Elementary School comprised of 325 females and 296 males whilst the student body of Joseph Elementary School comprised 305 females and 364 males.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multiracial</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Free &amp; Reduced Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHARISMA E.S.</strong></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JOSEPH E.S.</strong></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>88.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.1.** Comparison of participant schools racial/ethnic and SES demographics.

Quantitative Findings Relative to Student Outcomes

**Research Question 1**

What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership program and a matching school without this program?

Comparing academic outcomes between matching schools. The two matching schools, Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools were first compared descriptively on the Florida Accountability
School Grade (FASG) followed by a comparison of student reading achievement. Regarding Florida Accountability School Grade (FASG), Charisma ES had a grade of F in 2009-2010 when the Just Love program was implemented. Charisma ES improved to a C the following year in 2010-2011 and maintained a C grade until 2012-2013 when the school earned a D. On the other hand, the matching school, Joseph ES had a grade of D for the years 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and then earned a grade of F in 2012-2013. These results are illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Comparison of School Accountability Grades (FASG) for the Academic Years 2009 to 2013 for Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Total Points Earned</th>
<th>School Grade (FASG)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charisma ES</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph ES</td>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to comparing Florida Accountability School Grades (FASG), to further examine academic outcomes, Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools were compared on standard reading scores on the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) tests for assessment periods one (AP1) and three (AP3) during the 2010-2011, 2011-2012, and 2012-2013 school years (see Table 4.2). Scores were
compared for grades three to five. Unfortunately, data were unavailable for the baseline year 2009-2010 when the Just Love program was begun.

Mean difference scores on the FAIR standard scores for reading indicated that on average Charisma Elementary School made bigger gains in reading achievement than Joseph Elementary School over the three academic years 2010-2013 for grades three to five. While both schools made gains, the gains for Charisma appear to be larger (see Figure 4.2)

Table 4.2. Comparison of the Mean Differences on FAIR Test Scores for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013 for Third through Fifth Grades at Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAIR Reading Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP1</td>
<td>AP3</td>
<td>AP1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>79.54</td>
<td>84.95</td>
<td>88.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisma ES</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>11.89</td>
<td>8.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph ES</td>
<td>80.56</td>
<td>83.36</td>
<td>89.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>13.31</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>8.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Group</td>
<td>$F (1, 496) = .152$</td>
<td>$F (1, 492) = 0.28$</td>
<td>$F (1, 365) = 6.00^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Group</td>
<td>$F (1, 496) = 27.36^{***}$</td>
<td>$F (1, 492) = 11.07^{**}$</td>
<td>$F (1, 365) = 33.97^{***}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>$F (1, 496) = 2.90$</td>
<td>$F (1, 492) = 4.49^*$</td>
<td>$F (1, 365) = 12.26^{**}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. AP1 = Assessment Period 1 which is from September to October; AP3 = Assessment Period 3 which is from March to May.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, *$p < .05$
Mixed ANOVAS (Split-plot ANOVAS) were conducted to compare mean differences in reading achievement between Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools on the FAIR standard scores (See Table 4.2). A mixed ANOVA was conducted to compare school differences between AP1 and AP3 for each academic year. In each ANOVA, the between group factor was the schools and the repeated measure or within-group factor was the FAIR scores for AP1 and AP3. There were significant school x time of test interactions for the academic year 2011-2012, $F (1, 492) = 4.49, p = .035$, and for the academic year 2012-2013, $F (1, 365) = 12.26, p = .001$ (see Table 4.2). In both years, students in Charisma ES scored lower on the FAIR test in AP1, but higher than Joseph ES in AP 3. These results indicate that students in third, fourth, and fifth grades at Charisma ES made greater gains in reading achievement than students at Joseph ES in 2011-2012 and 2012-13.

**Figure 4.2.** Comparison of the participating schools’ mean differences on the FAIR test between assessment periods 1 and 3 for academic years 2010 to 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charisma E.S.</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph E.S.</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing the number of discipline referrals between matching schools. Differences in the number of discipline referrals students received from Kindergarten through fifth grades in Charisma and
Joseph ES were examined using descriptive analyses of school level data. Descriptive analyses revealed that the number of discipline referrals at Charisma ES was 718 in 2009-2010 prior to the start of the program, but made a dramatic drop to 234 referrals in 2010-2011 when the Just Love program was implemented and to 135 referrals by 2012-2013 (see Table 4.3). In addition, the average number of discipline referrals per student at Charisma Elementary fell from 1.24 to 0.23 from 2009 to 2013.

In contrast, the number of discipline referrals at Joseph ES was 107 in 2009-2010 and increased consistently each year until it reached 215 referrals in 2012-2013 (see Table 4.3). Also, the average number of discipline referrals per student at Joseph Elementary climbed from 0.18 to 0.32 from 2009 to 2013. Figure 4.3 shows a steep downward trend in average number of discipline referrals in Charisma ES (from 1.24 to 0.23) and a gradual upward trend in average number of discipline referrals in Joseph ES (from 0.18 to 0.32) from 2009-2013 (see Figure 4.3).

**Table 4.3.** Comparison of the Total and Average Number of Discipline Referrals for the Academic Years 2009 to 2013 for Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charisma E.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Discipline Referrals</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals per student</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph E.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Discipline Referrals</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals per student</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.3. Comparison of the average number of disciplinary referrals in Charisma ES and Joseph ES for the academic years 2009 to 2013.

Comparing the number of students who received discipline referrals between matching schools. Differences in the number of students who received discipline referrals from Kindergarten through fifth grades in Charisma and Joseph ES were examined using descriptive analyses of school level data. Descriptive analyses revealed that the number of students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES was 179 in 2009-2010 prior to the start of the program, but dropped to 80 referrals in 2010-2011 when the Just Love program was implemented and to 67 referrals by 2012-2013 (see Table 4.4). The average number of students who received discipline referrals at Charisma Elementary fell from 0.31 to 0.11 from 2009 to 2013.

In contrast, the number of students who received discipline referrals at Joseph ES was 62 in 2009-2010 and increased until it reached 93 referrals in 2011-2012 and then decreased to 74 in 2012-2013. The average number of students who received discipline referrals in Joseph ES was constant from 0.10 to 0.11 from 2009 to 2013. Although the average number of students who received referrals was identical at both schools in 2012-2013, the average number of students who received referrals at Charisma ES demonstrated the greater decline. Figure 4.4 shows a strongly downward trend in number of students...
who received discipline referrals in Charisma ES and a somewhat stable trend in number of students who received discipline referrals in Joseph ES from 2009-2013. Although the percentage of students who received referrals was identical at both schools in 2012-2013, the percentage of referrals at Charisma ES demonstrated the greater decline.

Table 4.4. Comparison of the Total and Average Number of Students Who Received Discipline Referrals for the Academic Years 2009 to 2013 for Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Students Who Received Discipline Referrals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charisma E.S.</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph E.S.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>808</td>
<td>680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4. Comparison of the average number of students who received disciplinary referrals in Charisma ES and Joseph ES for the academic years 2009 to 2013.
Comparing attendance rates between matching schools. Differences in average attendance rates for Pre-K through fifth grades in Charisma and Joseph ES were compared using descriptive analyses of school level data. Descriptive analyses revealed that the average attendance rates at Charisma ES climbed from 91.35% in 2009-2010 prior to the start of the program, to 92.55% in 2010-2011 when the Just Love program was implemented and to 93.23% attendance by 2012-2013 (see Table 4.5). Similarly, the average attendance rates at Joseph ES increased slightly at 93.94% in 2009-2010 to 94.13% attendance in 2011-2012 and 94.56% in 2012-2013. Attendance rates at Charisma ES increased 1.88 points and attendance rates at Joseph ES increased 0.62 points between 2009 and 2013 indicating that attendance rates at Charisma ES increased three times that of Joseph ES’. Figure 4.5 illustrates that attendance in Charisma ES, despite a slight upward trend from 2009-2013, was lower overall than attendance at Joseph ES.

In order to further examine differences in attendance rates, a mixed ANOVA (Split-plot ANOVA) was conducted to compare average attendance differences between Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools for the four academic years, 2009-2013. The average attendance rate for each classroom in both schools was used. The between group factor was the schools and the repeated measure or within-group factor was the average attendance rates over the four years. Analyses revealed significant within group differences in attendance rates over the four academic years, $F(3, 189) = 4.87, p = .003$. Post-hoc paired t-tests indicated that the increases in attendance rates in 2011-2012 and in 2012-2013 in both schools were significantly higher than attendance rates in 2009-2010. In addition, between group differences indicated that attendance rates differed significantly between the two schools with students in Joseph Elementary School having slightly higher attendance rates ($M = 92.50$) than students in Charisma Elementary School, ($M = 94.20$). There were no significant interaction effects between schools and attendance rates.
Table 4.5. Comparison of the Average Attendance Rates for the Academic Years 2009 to 2013 for Pre-K through Fifth Grades at Charisma and Joseph Elementary Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charisma E.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>91.35</td>
<td>92.55</td>
<td>93.04</td>
<td>93.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Joseph E.S.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>93.94</td>
<td>94.16</td>
<td>94.13</td>
<td>94.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within Group</th>
<th>Between Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (School x Time of Attendance)</td>
<td>$F (3, 189) = 4.87^{**}$</td>
<td>$F (3, 189) = 1.85$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$F (1, 63) = 38.36^{***}$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Each N represents number of classrooms.

Figure 4.5. Comparison of attendance rates at Charisma ES and Joseph ES for the academic years 2009 to 2013.
Research Question 2

What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between students in adopted classes and students in non-adopted classes?

Comparing academic outcomes between adopted and non-adopted classes. Descriptive analyses and mixed ANOVAS were conducted to compare reading achievement scores between adopted and non-adopted classrooms of third, fourth, and fifth grades at Charisma Elementary School. Adopted and non-adopted classrooms were compared on standard reading scores on the Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) tests for assessment periods one (AP1) and three (AP3) for each of the three academic years 2010-2013. Once again, data were unavailable for the baseline year 2009-2010 when the Just Love program was begun.

Descriptive analyses of the mean scores on the FAIR indicated that on average both adopted and non-adopted classes appeared to make gains in reading from AP1 to AP3 in each of the three years. In addition, adopted classes appeared to have higher scores on the FAIR in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 than non-adopted classes (see Figure 4.6).

Mixed ANOVAS (Split-plot ANOVAS) were conducted to further compare mean differences in reading between adopted and non-adopted classes on the FAIR standard scores (See Table 4.6). A separate mixed ANOVA was done for each year because the children were different across each year. In each ANOVA, the between group factor was the classrooms and the repeated measure or within-group factor was the FAIR scores for AP 1 and AP3.

There were no significant classroom x time of test interaction effects for each of the academic years. However, in each year, there were significant within group differences meaning that all students, regardless of whether their classroom was adopted or not, scored significantly higher on the FAIR in AP3 relative to AP1. In addition, in 2011-2012, overall, students in adopted classrooms scored significantly higher ($M = 92.17$) than students in non-adopted classrooms ($M = 89.96$) on the FAIR.
Table 4.6. Comparison of the Mean Differences in Adopted and Non-Adopted Classes FAIR Test Scores for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013 for Third through Fifth Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAIR Reading Test</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AP1</td>
<td>AP3</td>
<td>AP1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>80.20</td>
<td>84.87</td>
<td>91.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>10.37</td>
<td>7.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Diff.</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Adopted Classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>79.37</td>
<td>85.01</td>
<td>87.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>12.26</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Diff.</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>6.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Between Group</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F (1, 215) = 0.05</td>
<td>F (1, 209) = 4.46*</td>
<td>F (1, 185) = 1.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Group</td>
<td>F (1, 215) = 13.58***</td>
<td>F (1, 209) = 8.99**</td>
<td>F (1, 185) = 34.11***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (Classroom x Time of Test)</td>
<td>F (1, 215) = 0.12</td>
<td>F (1, 209) = 0.81</td>
<td>F (1, 185) = 0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. AP1 = Assessment Period 1 which is from September to October; AP3 = Assessment Period 3 which is from March to May.
Na = number of students in adopted classes from 3rd through 5th grades.
*** p < .001, ** p < .01, *p < .05

Figure 4.6. Comparison of the mean differences on the FAIR test between assessment periods 1 and 3 in adopted and non-adopted classes received in Charisma ES for academic years 2010 to 2013.
Comparing the number of discipline referrals between adopted and non-adopted classrooms. Descriptive analyses of school level data were used to compare differences in the number of discipline referrals students received in adopted and non-adopted classes from Kindergarten through fifth grades in Charisma ES. Descriptive analyses revealed that students in adopted classes received 75 discipline referrals in 2010-2011, but these dropped consistently each year to 48 referrals in 2012-2013 (see Table 4.7). In contrast, students in non-adopted classes received 159 referrals in 2010-2011 with a similar drop each year to 85 referrals in 2012-2013. These data indicate that number of referrals dropped each year for both adopted and non-adopted classes. Further, although adopted classes had a slightly higher average number of referrals in 2010-2011, the average number of disciplinary referrals per class was lower for adopted classes than for non-adopted classes in 2011-2012, one academic year after the Just Love partnership program was implemented. However, lack of student level data did not allow inferential analyses of discipline referral data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes adopted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes non-adopted</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>3.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the number of students who received discipline referrals in adopted and non-adopted classrooms. Differences in the number of students who received discipline referrals in adopted and non-adopted classrooms from Kindergarten through fifth grades in Charisma ES were examined using descriptive analyses of school level data (see Table 4.8). Descriptive analyses revealed that the average number of students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES were initially higher in adopted classrooms than non-adopted classrooms in 2010-2011, but were lower for adopted classes in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 (see Figure 4.8).

Comparing attendance rates between adopted and non-adopted classes. Differences in average attendance rates for Pre-K through fifth grades in Charisma ES were compared using descriptive analyses of school level data. Descriptive analyses revealed small, but slightly higher average attendance rates for adopted classes at Charisma ES when compared to non-adopted classes for the 2010-2013 academic years (see Table 4.9).
Table 4.8. Comparison of the Total and Average Number of Students Who Received Discipline Referrals in Adopted and Non-Adopted Classes for 2010 to 2013 from Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students Who Received Discipline Referrals</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes adopted</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes non-adopted</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8. Comparison of the average number of students who received disciplinary referrals in adopted and non-adopted classes in Charisma ES and Joseph ES for the academic years 2009 to 2013.
Table 4.9. Comparison of the Average Attendance Rates in Adopted and Non-Adopted Classes for Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>93.30</td>
<td>93.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Adopted Classes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>92.41</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>92.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within Group</th>
<th>Between Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction (Classroom x Time of Attendance)</td>
<td>$F(2, 54) = .42$</td>
<td>$F (2, 54) = .40$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$F (1, 27) = 1.09$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Each N represents number of classrooms.

In order to further examine differences in attendance rates, a mixed ANOVA (Split-plot ANOVA) were conducted to compare average attendance differences between adopted and non-adopted classes at Charisma Elementary School for the three academic years, 2010-2013. The average attendance rate for each classroom was used. The between group factor was the classrooms and the repeated measure or within-group factor was the average attendance rates over the three years. Analyses indicated no significant within or between group differences in attendance rates over the three academic years (see Table 4.9). This result indicates that, in general, there were no significant differences in attendance rates when comparing adopted and non-adopted classes over the three academic years. However, given that the average attendance rate for Charisma ES was 91.35 in 2009-2010 (see Table 4.5) and that attendance rates rose each year after that to a 2.59 point difference in 2012-2013, the upward trend in attendance...
rates (see Figure 4.9) suggests that if student level data was available for the 2009-2010 school year, the data may have indicated some significance differences in attendance rates when compared to 2009-2010.

![Figure 4.9](image_url)

**Figure 4.9.** Comparison of attendance rates in adopted and non-adopted classes for pre-kindergarten through fifth grades at Charisma Elementary School for the academic years 2010 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Classes</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>93.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Adopted Classes</td>
<td>92.41</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>92.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

a) What differences exist in student outcomes (academic, behavior and attendance) between mentored students and students not mentored?

**Comparing academic outcomes for mentored and non-mentored students.** Descriptive analyses and mixed ANOVAS were conducted to compare differences in reading achievement scores between students who were mentored and not mentored in the third, fourth, and fifth grades at Charisma Elementary School. A random sample of third through fifth grade students who were not mentored was selected as a comparison group. Standard reading scores on the Florida Assessment for Instruction in
Reading (FAIR) tests for assessment periods one (AP1) and three (AP3) were compared for mentored and non-mentored students in third through fifth grades for each of the three academic years 2010-2013. Once again, data were unavailable for the baseline year 2009-2010 when the Just Love partnership program began.

Descriptive analyses of the mean scores on the FAIR indicated that on average both mentored and non-mentored students appeared to make gains in reading from AP1 to AP3 in each of the three years (see Figure 4.10).

![Figure 4.10. Comparison of the mean differences on the FAIR test between assessment periods 1 and 3 for mentored students and non-mentored students received in Charisma ES for academic years 2010 to 2013.](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Mentored</th>
<th>Mentored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A mixed ANOVA was conducted to further compare group differences between AP1 and AP3 for each academic year. An ANOVA was conducted separately for each year because the students were not the same across all three years. In each mixed ANOVA, the between group factor was mentored/non-mentored students and the repeated measure or within-group factor was the FAIR scores for AP1 and
AP3. Mixed ANOVAS (Split-plot ANOVAS) indicated that both mentored and non-mentored students made significant gains in reading from AP1 to AP3 in each of the three years (see Table 4.10). These results indicate that all students, regardless of mentoring status, scored significantly higher on the FAIR in AP3 relative to AP1 during each year. In addition, in 2010-2011, overall, non-mentored students scored significantly higher (M = 93.52) than mentored students (M = 76.41) on the FAIR. There were no significant student X test interactions for any of the academic years.

**Table 4.10.** Comparison of the Mean Differences on FAIR Test Scores for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013 for Mentored and Non-Mentored Students in Third through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAIR Reading Comprehension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentored Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>72.91</td>
<td>79.91</td>
<td>86.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>9.84</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>10.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Diff. (AP3 – AP1)</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mentored Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>90.12</td>
<td>96.92</td>
<td>86.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>12.84</td>
<td>7.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Diff. (AP3 – AP1)</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.84</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

- Between Group: F(1, 45) = 53.65***
- Within Group: F(1, 45) = 15.79***
- Interaction: F(1, 45) = 0.003

**Note.** AP1 = Assessment Period 1 which is from September to October; AP3 = Assessment Period 1 which is from March to May. N<sub>a</sub> = random sample of non-mentored students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grades. *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05.
Comparing the number of discipline referrals between mentored and non-mentored students. Descriptive analyses of school level data were used to compare differences in the number of discipline referrals mentored and non-mentored students in Kindergarten through fifth grades at Charisma ES received. Descriptive analyses revealed that the number of discipline referrals mentored students received dropped consistently over the three years from 59 discipline referrals in 2010-2011 to 12 referrals in 2012-2013 (see Table 4.11). In the same time period, the average number of discipline referrals fell from 1.31 to 0.44 for mentored students, three times lower than when the program began in 2010-2011. In contrast, non-mentored students received 175 referrals in 2010-2011 and dropped to 123 referrals in 2012-2013. In the same time period, the average number of discipline referrals fell from 1.02 to 0.74 for non-mentored students. These results suggest that although average number of discipline referrals was higher for mentored students in 2010-2011 and 2011-2013, the average number of disciplinary referrals was lower for mentored than for non-mentored students in 2012-2013 (see Figure 4.11).

Table 4.11. Comparison of the Total Number and Average of Discipline Referrals Mentored and Non-Mentored Students Received for 2010 to 2013 from Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Discipline Referrals</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentored Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of mentored students</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Mentored Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-mentored students</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of discipline referrals</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the number of mentored and non-mentored students who received discipline referrals. Differences in the number of mentored and non-mentored students who received discipline referrals from Kindergarten through fifth grades in Charisma ES were examined using descriptive analyses (see Table 4.12). Descriptive analyses revealed that compared to non-mentored students, the average number of mentored students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES were lower for the 2010-2013 academic years (see Figure 4.12).
Table 4.12. Comparison of the Total and Average Number of Mentored and Non-Mentored Students Who Received Discipline Referrals 2010 to 2013 from Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students who Received Discipline Referrals</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentored Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of mentored students</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Mentored Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of non-mentored students</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of students who received referrals</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.12. Comparison of the average number of mentored and non-mentored students who received disciplinary referrals in Charisma ES for the academic years 2010 to 2013.
Comparing attendance rates between mentored and non-mentored students. To choose non-mentored students to compare mentored students with on attendance data, propensity score matching (using nearest neighbor matching) was used to match each mentored student for the three academic years 2010-2013 to a non-mentored student with similar characteristics in Charisma ES. Matching was done based on grade level, exceptional student education (ESE) status (i.e., disability or gifted status), race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status (i.e., free or reduced lunch), and English Language Learner (ELL) status. After matching, paired (or dependent) t-tests were compared to compare mean differences in attendance rates between mentored and non-mentored students.

Descriptive analyses indicate that mentored students had a slightly lower mean attendance rate than non-mentored students for the 2010-2011 and 2012-2013 school years. However, during the 2011-2012 school year, mentored students had slightly higher attendance rates than non-mentored students (see Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13. Comparison of attendance rates in between Mentored and Non-mentored Students in Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mentored</th>
<th>Non-Mentored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>92.83</td>
<td>94.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>94.63</td>
<td>91.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>93.16</td>
<td>96.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paired sample t-tests to compare mean differences in attendance for the 2010-2011 and 2012-2012 school years indicate that these differences were not significant. However, the mean difference between mentored and non-mentored students for the 2011-2012 school year was significantly different with mentored students having significantly higher attendance than non-mentored students (see Table 4.13).

Table 4.13. Comparison of the Average Attendance Rates between Mentored and Non-Mentored Students in Pre-Kindergarten through Fifth Grades at Charisma Elementary School for the Academic Years 2010 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentored Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>92.83</td>
<td>94.63</td>
<td>93.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>5.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Mentored Students (Matched)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates</td>
<td>94.31</td>
<td>91.71</td>
<td>96.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paired T-test</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference Between Attendance Rates</td>
<td>-1.48</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>-2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-statistic</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>2.26*</td>
<td>-2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) What differences exist in attendance rates by years of mentoring?

Comparing attendance rates by years of mentoring for mentored students only. The years of mentoring and attendance rates the year prior to mentoring and during mentoring (i.e., the last year the student was mentored) were calculated for the 20 mentored students who were interviewed. Two of these students were excluded because the year before they were mentored they attended another school;
therefore, their attendance rates prior to mentoring was not available. Descriptive analyses of average attendance rates for the mentored students \((N = 18)\) indicated that attendance rates increased with years of mentoring (see Figure 4.14). After one year of mentoring attendance rates increased 1.7 points, after two years of mentoring attendance rates increased 5.3 points, and after three years of mentoring attendance rates increased 8.1 points (see Table 4.14). Small sample sizes did not allow for inferential analyses to determine if these differences in attendance were significant.

**Table 4.14.** Comparison of the Number of Years of Mentored Students who were Interviewed and Average Attendance Rates Prior to and During Mentoring from 2009 to 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates Prior to Mentoring</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Attendance Rates During Mentoring</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference in Attendance Rates</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.14.** Comparing the number of years students were mentored and their attendance rates at Charisma ES prior to and during mentoring for the academic years 2009 to 2013.
Qualitative Findings Relative to Students’ Satisfactions, Experiences and Recommendations for Just Love

The purpose of this section is to answer question four to six of the research questions, examining the perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations of Just Love through the voices of the children involved in the partnership. The questions being answered are:

4. What were students’ perceived satisfactions of the “Just Love” programs?
5. What were students’ experiences as a result of the “Just Love” programs?
6. What suggestions would participants have regarding how to improve the Just Love programs (challenges, recommendations for improvements)?

The categories and themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview data represent the perceptions, satisfactions, experiences, and recommendations for improvement concerning Just Love partnership program. Twenty participants (referred to as students, children or mentees) took part in the photo elicitation and interviews. This resulted in responses that answered questions four through six. First, I share a description of the categories and themes that emerged from the responses of the children. I provide excerpts from students’ responses in a thematic manner as a description of children’s own views of Just Love along with a thick rich description of each theme. The children’s responses are presented through overarching categories, themes and codes. Next, I describe the patterns that emerged from the children’s selection of the pictures used in the photo elicitation process. The present study was then triangulated with a previous evaluation study examining teachers and volunteer’s perceptions (Henry et al., 2012). Finally, I address specific answers to the research questions 4-6 and summarize the results relative to the students’ perceived satisfactions, experiences and recommendations of Just Love.
Categories and Themes that Emerged from Interviews of Children with Photo Elicitation

As children responded to the interview questions that they were asked about Just Love, several key themes emerged which were encapsulated into six categories. The six categories were (a) perceptions of Just Love, (b) positive feelings, (c) positive relationships and connectedness, (d) classroom and school climate, (e) experiences, and (f) support and resources (see Table 4.15). These are described below to provide a thick rich description of the children’s perceived satisfactions, experiences and recommendations of Just Love.

Table 4.15. Categories and Themes Emerging from Thematic Analysis of the Transcribed Data from Interviews of the Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Perceptions of Just Love</th>
<th>Positive Feelings</th>
<th>Positive Relationships and connectedness</th>
<th>Classroom and school climate</th>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>Support and Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Described as people</td>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Reciprocal relationships</td>
<td>Classroom changes</td>
<td>Celebrations and Activities</td>
<td>Academic Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping</td>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Role models</td>
<td>School changes</td>
<td>Gatherings for Everyone</td>
<td>Academic Support (mentors) Social Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving</td>
<td>Memories</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spending time together (mentors)</td>
<td>New Experiences and Opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loving and Caring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dependable and Consistent (mentors)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Category 1: Perceptions of Just Love.** The first category, *Perceptions of Just Love* was divided into four themes (see Figure 4.15). The first theme that emerged was children *Describing Just Love as People*. These people are the volunteers who through their *Helping* were able to assist the children in
ways that made things more pleasant and easier to deal with. The Just Love volunteers were also Giving by providing the children with things that they valued or needed. The fourth theme was called Loving and Caring and was representative of the volunteers showing the children that they matter and are valuable. The following is an explanation of these four themes: a) described as people; b) helping; c) giving; and d) loving and caring using the excerpts of the interviews with the children. Their voices reveal their perception of Just Love (see Figure 4.15).

![Perceptions of Just Love](image)

**Figure 4.15.** Category 1: Perception of Just Love and themes.

*Theme 1.1. Just Love described as people.* When children were asked the question: “Tell me what do you know about Just Love”, they described Just Love as people who are nice, wonderful, fun and kind. They treated the children with respect and act as though they were proud of the children. The children found the volunteers to be affirming. The children shared that the Just Love people are happy and always smiling. For instance here are some things that some of the children said about Just Love:

*They are nice and kind, I know I keep repeating that and they’re always treating people respectfully.* (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

*Well Just Love is people that come in to see us that bring things for us and they have a whole bunch of fun with us.* (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)
*Just Love is sharing their life with all of the students.* (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

*Just Love is nice too and Just Love always have a smile on they face they never be it’s like they always happy they never get mad like if something go wrong they still have a smile on they face it’s like they happy all the time.* (Andre, grade 3, male mentee)

Monique felt her mentor treated her like family but not just her but others as well. She stated that:

*She is really nice and kind to me and she treats me like I’m her daughter and what I like about her is she treats other people how she wants to be treated too and every time she sees me she always has a smile one her face which is what I like about her.* (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

When children spoke of kindness they said that the mentors were not only kind to them but to their friends as well. Valerie perceived the volunteers as people who came to see the children and get things ready for them whether it was a party or school supplies or field trips.

*I like this picture because when I was in 2nd grade and we had went to the zoo my teacher in 2nd grade kept talking to Just Love asking them like they getting things ready for us at the end of the year or at the end of the month* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

*Theme 1.2. Helping.* The children talked about Just Love as people who helped the children, their families and their school with what they wanted or needed.

*Well they nice people. They can help you when you need somebody to help you.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

*They adopt you to help you in with ever you need with school work or home work or you need somebody to talk to.* (Joseph, grade 5, female mentee)

Children saw Just Love as helping them in various ways such as with classroom activities, fun activities, schoolwork, with problems they face and other things. The volunteers assist in ways that make things more pleasant or easier to deal with. This helping made the children feel like they could overcome obstacles in their lives and to think better of themselves. Orland, along with other children commented:

*That they come to help you when you in need and then they send people like my mentor and other people, mentors to help children, individual children and it started the Just Love program started...in 2010 that's when they brought it here and they come and give you support that you need.* (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)
That they come in and then they help us with our work or sometimes they be we go eat lunch with them or we play games or go to the computer lab and have and play games on the computer. (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

They’re using their time and their skills to make people feel important to think more about themselves to think that they can overcome what they think they can be. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

**Theme 1.3. Giving.** Children were asked in the interview the following: “Tell me about some of the things Just Love volunteers gave you.” The children said they were given presents for Christmas, for birthdays and other occasions. They received gifts such as toys, games, balls, books, and clothing items and accessories. Tiffany reported:

*Because Just Love always give a lot of kids presents and everything and some kids don’t even get that. And they, Just Love give them food for the parties and they give them Christmas presents and everything.* (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

The volunteers also bought them special gifts that the children thought were valuable such as Macy’s diamond earrings, a jewelry box, a Barbie doll thing with glitter, lip-gloss, and nail polish, and other special items. Dulcie shared with strong emotions how she “lost her breath” when she received a special gift. She was floored at such generosity and found “she couldn’t sit still” when she received so much she “had to take it home”.

*They sponsor most of the parties like Christmas parties, Halloween party anything and so and they’re nice because they like buy the material and like they buy presents like and they just give us gifts and like one thing they gave me was so special I just I lost my breath and it was a present and it was Macy’s diamond earrings. They gave me like fruit and candy and they gave us you know back to school supplies they gave us treats like cookies and candy and chocolate. Girl I couldn’t sit still and it was just so much I had to take it home.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Other item teachers received were classroom supplies, to include things like wipes and paper towels.

School supplies that children received included book bags and items they needed for school including school uniforms, and basic needs items. They also gave them things to do when they were out on breaks. According to the children,

*They gave us like forks, paper, snacks, like stuff that keeps our room clean, like wipes and paper towels, soap and that’s it.* (Robby, grade 4, male mentee)

*Well what they gave me is that they gave me kind of clothing, like a jacket and a school uniform shirt and some jeans.* (Sharai, grade 4, female mentee)
They gave me tools like mechanical pencils and a bookmark and a regular pencil that you supposed to use on the FCAT. A book for like when we had Spring Break then we had, they gave us books to read and homework to do. (Julia, grade 4, female mentee)

The children loved the food items the volunteers gave them from the every day treats to the Thanksgiving dinner. One of the things that Just Love gave the children was a covered PE court so that the children would not have to play in the hot sun. Those are just some of the things that Just Love gave to the children.

They gave us the tent outside on the P.E. court because they knew that it was getting hot so they decided to give it to us as a gift. They give us presents every single Christmas in case we can’t get any that day. They give us shirts and they give us knowledge. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

Theme 1.4. Loving and caring. This theme emerged throughout the interviews. The children shared their views of Just Love as people who love and care for them and their school and this is displayed in the way they treat the children. Sharai shared that "Just Love is caring for the children because they’re doing things for them". She also shared that, “they provide a lot of things to help the students and care about us like our parents”. Joseph made it very clear that the children knew that Just Love, “they don't do it because they have to, they actually care” for the children. Orland shared that even when children were doing activities and having fun, the volunteers made sure they were safe and careful and he said, "it shows how Just Love cares about their children". When Just Love bought the children pajamas, Orland said, “Just Love is giving these kids a pajama party to show them that they really do care cause some of them don’t very get pajamas”. The children expressed that the school also loves the Just Love volunteers. Throughout the interviews children continually expressed their perception of feeling loved and cared for by Just Love:

*That Just Love like is helpful and love Just and love like they love all the kids in Just.* (Sharai, grade 4, female mentee)

*Our school loves Just love.* (Andre, grade 3, male mentee)

*It’s fun, really fun everybody love it, the whole school love it.* (Stephen, grade 4, mentee)

*Just Love cares and supports us like when some kids don’t get presents all the time.* (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)
The children knew that they mattered to Just Love and were considered valuable. According to Orland he sees this expression of worth as stated below:

*Because they are like celebrating the children and giving them a chance get presents for Christmas and showing them that they care about their life because if their family can’t afford to give them a present they just want to let them know that Just Love can afford it. And that they’re worth everything they are!* (Orland, grade 5, mentee)

Another child, Joseph shared in his own words an example of unconditional love displayed by Just Love. He believed that Just Love does what they do out of love rather than to be recognized.

*And we as we all know the Just Love is the people who donate things to Just Elementary for the love, just because like just because they care for you. Love is very unexplainable.* (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

*They’re having fun. Not a lot of kids that are poor have fun. They get to in this school for free but not a lot of kids can have fun and free and get love at the same time. Usually people are doing it, just because, just so people can know them.* (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

**Category 2: Positive feelings.** The second category was a common thread throughout the excerpts of children as they expressed their perceptions of Just Love. This category was called *Positive Feelings.* Children were very expressive in describing Just Love. It was not just in what they said but the intensity with which they described Just Love made it was clear that they experience many positive feelings because of Just Love. The theme of *Appreciation* occurred as children expressed their understanding, and thankfulness for the volunteers giving up what they consider important and valuable in order to help them. Another theme was *Happiness* which the children’s pleasure and enjoyment in the presence of the volunteers. The enjoyment was not only in the present. The children not only remembered past experiences with Just Love in a favorable manner, but felt that these *Memories* will be worth remembering as they grow up. The following is an explanation of these three themes: a) appreciation; b) happiness; and c) memories using the excerpts of the interviews with the children. Their voices reveal the positive feelings children expressed of Just Love (see Figure 4.16).
Theme 2.1. Appreciation. The children were thankful for and appreciated all that the volunteers did for and with them. They felt like Just Love worked hard to make things enjoyable for them. Here is an example of a child who spoke of her thankfulness:

*We are thankful that we have like people like that because they didn’t have to spend their money they could just tell people to go out and buy their own but they used their own kindness.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Other students concurred by speaking of the sacrifice they felt volunteers made for them. They said that the volunteers gave up what was considered valuable—“their time”, in order to give them things and spend time with them.

*They really don’t have to come to see you they could just stay home but they take time to come see you.* (Nancy, grade 4, female mentee)

Children consistently spoke of how the volunteers “used their own money” to buy things for them. The children were thankful for the volunteers and the mentors doing this and they showed their appreciation by writing them thank you letters, as well as telling them thank you. The following excerpts are indicative of these sentiments:
They actually come and see us and they actually do this stuff for us they take up their time to buy us stuff and bring us stuff here. And we take up our time just to write letters to them we thank them. (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)

Just Love is like they brought presents to us and they used their money to buy it and like we got to say thank you back to them for buying us presents. (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

The children seemed to appreciate this gesture of volunteers using their own money because majority of the children spoke of it. Some of the examples below are phrases children used to express their thoughts on the volunteers “using their own money”:

...sponsored book bag and back to school supplies and like they bought that with they own money. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

...bought them gifts for Christmas and stuff and they bought it with they own money that they have. (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

...they paid for it all just to let them eat something good. (Tiffany, grade 3 female mentee)

...they had brought breakfast for All Pro Dads and stuff and that football players right there. And they got it for free for us. (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

The children appreciated that the volunteers did not have to do any of these things but they “choose” to do so for the children.

Because they didn’t have to do this but they made up their mind that they want to do this for kids and that it like because they set up all this and the results are nice. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Well we have two people that comes to our class named Mr. Herber and Mrs. Herber and when we run out of snacks, our teacher doesn’t have to go to the store and buy us nothing because they go to the store and bought us stuff.” (Robby, grade 4, male mentee)

Theme 2.2. Happiness. Having Just Love volunteers around the children caused them to feel happy. They were happy whether they were doing things with them or just being around them. Just Love brought the children happiness. The excerpts below illustrate this happiness.

They are happy spending time with them and celebrating with them. (Sharai, grade 4, female mentee)

Just Love bought all the kids a present and the kids going to take it home and they going put it under the Christmas Tree and wait till Christmas so they can open it and when they see the present they going be real happy because they got presents. (Carnell, grade 3 male mentee)
(Community Fair-Face painting) There's Just Love also helping getting there face painted and everyone just looks really happy and I like the fact about being happy because that’s the best feeling well it’s not the best feeling it’s like a feeling that you have that is like really really good inside you and your feelings in your heart. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

They volunteer to come mentor for kids and like the mentors are nice because they go out there way, they buy McDonalds and stuff and because were happy to have volunteers like that. (Shachia, grade 3, female mentee)

They gave us hope and stuff and happiness. (Roger, grade 3, male mentee)

Theme 2.3. Memories. The children remember past positive experiences they have had with the volunteers. The photos seem to elicit memories of past events that are meaningful to the children.

...And like most of the time when I was in like the years before when I’m in third we have celebrations like that for Christmas and we have like a big celebration and sometimes the mentors come and we have a great time and be happy. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

“We went to the petting zoo when I was in the second grade and I didn’t have to stay with my class, I went with him (mentor) instead. We got to touch all the animals and he came to my classroom to put on a special a Dr. Seuss movie when I was in the third grade, and then fourth grade for fourth he always used to come outside and play and we used to play Go Fish and other card games with him. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

Dulcie believes these times with the volunteers will remain with the children when they grow up. They have these moments that are worth remembering.

They create all the wonderful times so when the children grow up they have they remember all of the nice things that people did for them. (Valerie, grade 5, female mentee)

In fact during member checking one little girl, Tiffany said that even although she is in fourth grade, she would prefer to go back to a “younger grade”. When I asked her why she said she wanted to keep her mentor.

Category 3: Positive relationships and connectedness. The third category Positive Relationships and Connectedness comprised of four themes. The second theme Reciprocal Relationships were evident as the children indicated ways in which they and the volunteers interacted in a mutually relational way. The theme Role Models was supported as children shared their admiration for the volunteers and conveyed ways in which they tried to be more like them. Even although relationship between volunteers and children was evident, the mentor relationships appeared to be paramount in terms
of the time mentors spent with children. The third theme *Spending Time Together* (Mentors) was realized as children talked mostly of this opportunity to spend one on one time with their mentor. The last theme is this category, *Dependable and Consistent (Mentors)* spoke about the relationship of the mentors with the children where the children perceived the mentors to be people who can be trusted. If the mentors say that they will be there then they will be and if they cannot make it, there would be good reason. The mentors also bring consistency in the children’s lives providing needs, coming regularly and being present. The following is an explanation of these four themes: a) reciprocal relationships; b) role models; c) spending time together (mentors); and c) dependable and consistent (mentors) using the excerpts of the interviews with the children. Their voices reveal the relationship and connectedness the children have with the Just Love volunteers (see Figure 4.17).

**Figure 4.17.** Category 3: Positive Relationships and Connectedness and Themes

*Theme 3.1. Reciprocal relationships.* As children examined the different photos representing Just Love they described their relationship with the volunteers as one in which they connected to them in a
mutually relational way. The volunteers not only helped the children through hard times but the children believe that this relationship was reciprocal. As stated by Dulcie about her relationship with her mentor:

What I like about having a mentor is it’s that mentors they like they sponsor and stuff and you know when like the kids are going through a tragic or something they like you know they just help them through it and if there’s something like with the mentor the kids will do just the same because the mentor shows the sweetness and the kindness so they help them. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

The children also felt that it was reciprocated by the volunteers when they expressed their thankfulness by writing the volunteers notes; the volunteers in return wrote them back as illustrated below:

...Like sometimes when you write notes to them they’ll write a note back...we’ll be like thank you for the party then they’ll send back a note and it be like they’ll thank you. (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

The children placed emphasis on the fact that the volunteers “take up their time” to do for the children and the children indicate that they in return take up their time to say thank you. Joimil conveyed this in his statement:

...They take up their time to buy us stuff... And we take up our time just to write letters to them.... (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)

Member checking revealed that in one of the classes, the children themselves typed the letters and that they actually made a book for Just Love because “they love them so much”. An example of the reciprocal relationship is demonstrated in the conversation between a mentor and his mentee- Robby shared:

We talk about what’s going on in school and how he’s doing and how I’m doing. (Robby, grade 4, male mentee)

The children did not only share their lives with the volunteers but the volunteers also shared about their own lives and families. Some children shared how they connected with volunteer’s families:

My mentor, she has grand children she’s told me about them. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

My mentor, I pretty much know everything about him except for his birthday. I know his age. I know his, he’s the best I know what he likes, I know his family members. It’s pretty cool for what I know about him... (Joseph, grade 5, male mentor)

...They like to know about you... (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)
Important to the relationship was that children felt safe with the volunteers. The children felt like the volunteers made things safe for them, and protected them so they trusted the volunteers. Trust is important to connectedness in the relationship. Carnell reported that he felt safe as implied below:

*It tells about Just Love bringing things to he school and making kids that’s to have fun just to have fun and Just Love people that making sure everything safe and doing things well.* (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

*It's like you being part of yourself when you like you have a big cousin or a big brother watching when you at school.* (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

**Theme 3.2. Role models.** Children continually shared sentiments of how the Just Love exemplified positive characteristics for them to follow. The children not only admired these attributes, but also believed that they could be like the volunteers and do good things for others. Valerie shared that they have taught her that she can be kind to others and not to only think about herself. Valerie also spoke of how Just Love has changed the school environment and she could do that too. They built confidence in the children causing them to feel that they too can make a difference.

*I like that. That one shows me that you can be more kind to people and you can have parties and stuff for them and stop thinking always about yourself.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

*Yes. I would like I would like to keep being a part of Just Love because they change our environment around this school and I could do that too.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

Just Love people were inspiring for the children not only now but in helping them to think about their future as they grow up. When looking at a photo of a volunteer sharing about his motorcycle and how he uses it in his career on a Career Day, Dulcie said that it encouraged the children helping them to see what kind of future they could have.

*That they showing a motorcycle and stuff the kids get really inspired and like they just wowed because they get an idea of what their future will be like.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Other children expressed that the volunteers are proud of them, and talked to them not only about their present abut also about their future building their aspirations. They learned about college, and how they can be whatever they want to be by working hard.
Showing us like what’s the many stuff out in the world and what you could be when you grow up, go to college and like what you could with your life. (Stephen, grade 4, male mentee)

Just Love also affirmed the children helping them to feel empowered. Their words made the children feel they are better than how they may feel at present. They knew that the volunteers were proud of them. Joseph shared his thoughts as he looked at a picture of All Pro Dads and Moms breakfast, which was sponsored by the Just Love volunteers. In the background there was a big sign on the projector that said “I’m proud of you because…” . Joseph saw that as meaning:

It’s making you think better than what you are because in the background if you read it says. ‘I’m proud of you because...’ you’re doing your best to do work, you’re going beyond, you’re doing your best. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

Theme 3.3. Spending time together (mentors). Children spoke of spending time with volunteers who were their mentors. Children expressed that they did things together with their mentors including painting, reading books and schoolwork, knitting, playing games, and eating together. Mentor even brought in things for them to do together. What Joimil liked about having his mentor was that “they come and see you and they take you” with them. This theme was identified throughout the interviews as children described Just Love but realized more in response to the following: “Tell me about your mentor. Tell me what things you did with your mentor. Tell me what you like about having a mentor.” One student Valerie described spending time for her as:

I paint some things one thing is that when am I painted a picture with my mentor. I painted more than one. Then another thing that is like when we be in the library when she come and get me on certain days when we be in the library we always reading cause she loves to read. They bring things in and they spend time with you. (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

The mentees liked that they got to spend time with their mentor- time that was “one-on-one” and special because like Tiffany said she does not really get to “with a person at her side”.

Another thing that she does with me was she like play games like Go Fish or Uno or Crazy Eights or Old Maid or something like that and it’s fun because I never have really have a chance to do that so with a person at my side I have the chance to do that. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)
Monique agreed:

*There is someone you could be with like on your own time so you could spend time with like it’s like they’re your family members…*(Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

The children had the opportunity to do many things together and learn about their mentor. These special times gave the mentee the opportunity to talk about anything, to enjoy celebrations and activities together. Some of these things they did together included playing or eating together, doing fun stuff such as painting, knitting.

*We play football, we eat pizza together.* (Michael, grade 3, male mentee)

*Oh, I went to the library and we’ll read together.* (Shachia, grade 3, female mentee)

*Well we played basketball, we play on the computer sometimes, we talk about things and sometimes we just walk around and just talk.* (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)

*...And we did this knitting thing. It is called am...I forgot .. I forgot what it is called but I am almost finished with it.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

**Theme 3.4. Dependable and consistent (mentors).** The children knew that their mentor would help them when they needed help to solve a problem, or if they were going through something tragic their mentor would be there for them. They trusted their mentors and were confident that they could count on them coming every week and when their mentor was absent it was for a good reason. They see their mentor as a friend and also as family. This theme of dependability and consistency is highlighted in these narratives:

*They always been there for you and when your in trouble or you need doing something that's hard.* (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

*What I like about having a mentor is that if you have a mentor you know that there will be there for you.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

*He comes with me every Thursday of the week and he’s come and spend time with me when we go to lunch and do everything together.* (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

*She comes mostly every Wednesday and Thursday well she’s supposed to come Thursday but she comes Wednesday too.* (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

The children knew that if their mentor has to miss time seeing them, they was a good reason. Here Tiffany and Joseph express their understanding when their mentor was not present:
That she went to this boat cruise and but she missed the day that she’s supposed to come for me and then she came back from the cruise early to come just see me. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

Yes, he left me for a little while but it was understandable it’s not he left just because he didn’t want to see me anymore it’s because of his job. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

**Category 4: Classroom and school climate.** Children were aware of changes in the classroom and school climate and spoke of these changes as being positive and uplifting. Hence, the fourth category was *Classroom and School Climate*. Two themes were used to generate this category. Just Love, was perceived by the children as bringing about *Classroom Changes*. These changes occurred in the classroom environment affecting the social climate, and the emotional and physical well being of the children and the teachers. The second theme was *School Changes*, which occurred in the whole school environment positively affecting the quality and character of school life. The following is an explanation of these two themes: a) classroom changes; and b) school changes using the excerpts of the interviews with the children. The voices of the children are what produced these themes as they answered questions relevant to the influence of Just Love on the classroom and the school (see Figure 4.18).

![Diagram of Classroom and School Climate and Themes](image)

**Figure 4.18.** Category 4: Classroom and School Climate and Themes

*Theme 4.1. Classroom climate.* Children were asked, “*What is your classroom like since Just Love came to your school?*” The children recognized that their classrooms had changed. They were fun and more exciting to the children. However having fun did not take away from the children’s learning.
They were still doing their work and they found themselves feeling encouraged with the volunteers being present. Andre said that his class mates were happy to know that even when they got things wrong, the volunteers did not get mad at them, but they smiled and let them know they would “do better next time”. Joseph was confident that the volunteers would “help you with anything you need or you want in your life”.

Since Just Love came to my class even though they’re fun it’s learning too, because they learn about the manners and you know all that stuff it helps kids get ready and they give them like notebooks and stuff so they get ready for the FCAT or SAT or whatever tests they’re taking. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

My class is they always have a smile on they face. If the teacher ask a question and they (student) get the question wrong everyone (volunteers) will look at them and they will smile at them and show that you’ll do better next time and tell them you’ll do better next time. (Andre, grade 3, male mentee)

The children enjoyed being able to engage with and have conversations with the volunteers in the classroom. The volunteers provided them with school supplies and other stuff that they need. The children enjoyed when they got to meet the volunteer’s family members and liked that they got to do a lot of different things with them in their classroom.

But when Miss Rebekah came she had her family members come over and that’s the part that I think they liked. (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

It’s wonderful cause they gave us things and school supplies and stuff. (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

Tiffany said that since Just Love came, her classmates were behaving better. The children described the classroom as wonderful, awesome, brighter, cheerful, joyful and happy now that they have Just Love.

They even found that the teacher was nicer.

My classroom is good because when my teacher say you better be good then they behave better and sometimes she don’t even have to tell them, they just do it. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

Well my classroom is like very cheerful and joyful and happy that they have Just Love. (Sharai, grade 4, female mentee)

Theme 4.2. School climate. The interview question used to elicit children’s perceptions on school climate was “What is the school like since Just Love came to your school?” Jesenia’s immediate response
to the school climate was that it was “Changed”. When children were struggling, she said the volunteers helped them to “understand and like reading they can’t really get but then they’ll start reading more faster and getting the words”. The school environment changed and the people in the school were nicer. The children were doing better academically and their grades had improved. Shachia, Dulcie, Monique and Julia shared their views on academic improvement:

*Better because we have nicer people in our school.* (Shachia, grade3, female mentee)

*In my school it’s been like first it was not okay because the grades were dropping but since Just Love came they were you know they were they helped bring the grades back up because they give them tips for the FCAT or SAT so we see that score for the SAT or FCAT we going to know it’s a big difference.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

*Everyone is appreciating to get more education and learning about all the subjects in like math, science, reading and all of that.* (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

*Better than how it was when they weren’t here. Because they put groups and help make you do better and read more than we used to.* (Julia, grade 4, female mentee)

The children described the school environment as exciting and friendlier. Orland said that the children used to “throw stuff on the playground like trash” but “Just Love helped us clean it up and so far it has been cleaner and nicer and friendlier.” “It’s much more funner” said Nancy. Dulcie described the morale of the children:

*That this one they like I said they’re face painting and they just come to rise the spirits of kids they like helping the school they just super nice and nobody would if they didn’t have them well the school would be boring because they the ones who boost up the funness.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Tiffany endorsed this by saying that Just Love afforded the children to have parties and celebrations and Christmas presents, “because sometimes kids don’t have like all parties and stuff and they don’t have Christmas presents”. Just Love changed the school from just feeling like “a normal day” (Nancy). The children were happy that the volunteers came because now they have people who are doing good things to help them with their work but they also do other things with them such as bring things for them, play with them and take time to be with them. Andre and Barbara further explained the difference Just Love brought to the school:
Just Love came when like I just felt happy because they been doing things good to help us when we do our work I meant do things with us. (Andre, grade 3, male mentee)

Good, because they bought us things and they took they time to play with us. (Barbara)

One of the changes is that people are “good and kind and thankful” (Roger). Other changes were heard in children’s explanation of the various photos they viewed. Robby considers Just Love coming to the school as important because they exposed to the children to information about a lot of things, and Joseph shared that a change he felt had occurred was that the school rating had probably gone up for various reasons as seen in his quote below:

Like the rating of the school has probably gone up more they help a lot it’s not they don’t do it just because they have to they actually care for you. That’s the improvement of the school. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

It’s like important that Just Love’s coming to our school and they telling us about stuff and they giving us information about stuff. (Robby, grade 4, male mentee)

The school has changed for the better.

My schools like it’s better then it was like two years ago or one year ago because ever since Just Love came our school got better and better. (Andre, grade 3, male mentee)

**Category 5: Experiences.** The fifth category, *Experiences* encompassed three themes. The first theme, *Celebrations and Activities*, represented the parties and group activities the volunteers set up to celebrate special times in the children’s lives. The volunteers sponsor celebrations and parties for holidays, birthdays, and special occasions. The second theme, *Gatherings for Everyone*, was developed as children shared about how Just Love sponsored gatherings for everyone to include the school, families and the community. Just Love provided the children with *New Experiences and Opportunities*, and was considered the third theme in this category. Children were provided children with experiences and opportunities that they either never had before Just Love or they felt they would not have without Just Love such as field trips, dances, and more. The following is an explanation of these three themes: a) celebrations and activities; b) gatherings for everyone; and c) new experiences and opportunities using the excerpts of the interviews with the children (see Figure 4.19).
Theme 5.1. Celebrations and activities. All children spoke about the parties and celebrations Just Love volunteers did for them including special holidays such as Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine’s Day or Easter. According to the children:

There's another celebration and I think this one is for Thanksgiving cause I could see that these are turkeys on the plates and plus in Thanksgiving everyone just has a smile on there face and I just love that and again it’s just a happy feeling and everyone likes Thanksgiving because they can be with there family and friends and spend time together. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

We have a Valentines party and they bought all the food for us, and they got us cupcakes and everything. They did a Christmas party and they did a Valentines Day party and then did a Easter, I mean they did a Thanksgiving party. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

They celebrate every, when they come to our class and have a party sometimes they celebrate Valentines Day and Halloween and Christmas. (Jesenia, grade 5, female mentee)

Children were celebrated on other special occasions as well such as birthdays, pajama parties, and class parties such as tea parties. Here is how the children felt about these celebrations:

My favorite thing to do is like that like when we have celebrations we do that. (Nancy, grade 4, female mentee)

They always come and help you when you do things and when you want to celebrate and have a party they will come. (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

They’re having a pajama party and every one looks like they’re happy and they’re like they’re happy that they get to spend time with their teachers and their class mates and like most of the
time when I was in like the years before when I'm in third we have celebrations like that for Christmas and we have like a big celebration and sometimes the mentors come and we have a great time and be happy. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

They celebrate parties with us like when on my teacher birthday they had came and they celebrate bringing a party. (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

When there was a party or celebration, the volunteers set things up for the party and brought the food items.

Because they have like they’re having a tea party... and like they set it up and just it ever stops... the sponsor group is from Just Love, it’s the 911 class and so they sponsor most of the parties like Christmas parties...they like buy the material... (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

They doing a tea party and they provided all that stuff for it. And they have meat stuff, Mrs. Becky brought provided the dresses. (Julia, grade 4, female mentee)

Like she had a part with them, gave them food, hats decorations, and more. (Stephen, grade 4, male mentee)

We have a Valentines party and they bought all the food for us, all the mentors bought all the food for us and they got us cupcakes and everything. (Tiffany, Grade 3, female mentee)

When the interviewer inquired of the children: “Tell me what the Just Love volunteers do with you at school” children described parties and celebrations. However they also described other activities to include dances, fun activities, celebration of tests and other classroom activities. Students responded as follows:

They’re doing like for birthdays like they have cupcakes and presents and they have like dances and stuff for us like the Greek dances and stuff. (Nancy, grade 4, female mentee)

They have parties with classes. And they do fun activities. (Michael, grade 3, female mentee)

My classroom is fun and we get to do a lot of stuff with them in our classroom (Shachia, grade 3, female mentee)

Theme 5.2. Gatherings for everyone. As children examined the photos they recognized some of the events that emerged into the theme- gatherings for everyone, to include teacher, volunteers, children and their family. Some of the events mentioned were All Pro Dads and I Moms Breakfast, Community
Fair (face painting), Field Day and Great American Teach In (i.e., Career Day). Dulcie found these gatherings to be her favorite. She said:

*My favorite thing to do is like when they’re having a gathering at the school like for everybody they come like they have like in this picture when they have one of these.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

*There’s Just Love also helping getting there face painted and everyone just looks really happy and I like the fact about being happy because that’s the best feeling well it’s not the best feeling it’s like a feeling that you have that is like really really good inside you and your feelings in your heart.* (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

The children saw events that involved speakers such as All Pro Dads and I Moms to be inspiring and allowed families to *interact with each other*. All Pro Dad and I Moms is a monthly gathering of fathers and mothers and their children at breakfast. It is a program of Family First, designed for the schools. Its purpose is to encourage families to bond through activities and discussions. This was an event that Just Love sponsored for Charisma E.S. Here is what a few children had to say about this event:

*Something I would love to come so like because it’s inspiring because and one thing else that I like to do is come to All Pro Dads and IMoms because it just helps the family interact with each other.* (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

*That they are out there with their parents and they having fun with their parents* (Afric, grade 3, male mentee)

*The picture (Photo of All Pro Dads and IMoms Breakfast) is showing affection because yes if somebody’s homeless and you’d buy food for them, that is very understandable but very expensive food that usually most people don’t get to experience that’s different you it’s again showing love and how much you care for that person. They’re communicating with each other as you can see right here. It’s not just like they’re its trustworthiness.* (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

*Because it teaching the kids about different activities, I don’t think and it’s supporting the parents to teach their child or something, something like that.* (Orland, grade 5, mentee)

Great American Teach In (Career Day) was another gathering that brought volunteers to the school to speak to the children about various careers. One student participant, Dulcie commented:

*The kids get really inspired and like they just wowed because they get an idea of what their future will be like.* (Dulcie, grade 3, mentee)
"It’s the Great American Teach In… like they come to our school and they show us like how to work stuff, how to and we get to get in the car, the racing car. (Jesenia, grade 5, mentee)

Theme 5.3. New experiences and opportunities. Just Love gave children the opportunity to experience things they had never experienced before. They also felt that some of these experiences they might not have had without Just Love. For them school may have been “boring or dull” but Just Love has come along and gave them new experiences and opportunities. They have “boosted up the funness”.

Dulcie shared what it would be like without Just Love:

...because if we didn’t have Just Love it would be boring because we would never have no parties no nothing. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Just Love also gave children the chance to have experiences they never had a chance to have before such as having a mentor, or going on a field trip:

This one is so important to me because they gave me a mentor and I always wanted a mentor. And I never had one in first grade or second grade or nothing. This my first mentor. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

Because they had they let the children go to the zoo and it’s fun at the zoo because the animals and it’s a petting zoo like it just super nice because the kids they never really have a chance to you know do that stuff so they just you know that they love the school. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

Whether it was providing school supplies or presents, having an experience such as a Thanksgiving feast, first time trying a salad, first time to the zoo for some children they were being given the opportunity to receive things that some children may not have had. These are things that sometimes the children shared that parents may not be able to afford or may not receive normally. Some excerpts of what children shared are:

Not a lot of kids have book bags like me I don’t have a book bag, they gave me one ... they bought them new things they got them new notebooks and pencils they got books for them (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

...because it is, it is giving the kids a chance to give them love and care by celebrating with them for Thanksgiving cause some kids don’t always celebrate this way, they eating something like a feast. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)
I think that shows Just Love because Just Love got the kids to the zoo for free. Sometimes people have to pay and that could be the first time the kids went to the zoo. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

Joseph shared a sentiment that not a lot of poor children get these experiences plus love at the same time. Just Love was able to give the children both.

**Category 6: Support and resources.** The sixth and final category was *Support and Resources.* This category was made up of three themes. The first theme was that of *Academic Support* where the volunteers of Just Love assisted children by helping them to prepare for tests as well as activities to enhance their reading and math skills, and prepare them for future careers. They also provide them with new knowledge. The second theme was similar to the first theme but this theme was more specific to the mentors providing the mentees *Academic Support (Mentors).* Many of the children spoke of how much the mentors took an active part in providing them with one-on-one support and resources to assist in developing their math and reading skills. The third theme was *Social Skills* where the volunteers taught and helped the children improve their social skills such as learning manners, anger management and how to interact with people and have conversation with them. The following is an explanation of these three themes: a) academic support; b) academic support (mentors); and c) social skills using the excerpts of the interviews with the children (see Figure 4.20).

**Figure 4.20.** Category 6: Support and Resources and themes
Theme 6.1. Academic support. Just Love helped the children with their education and learning. Even although the children talked about all of the fun activities they enjoyed, they spoke of the volunteers also being supportive in helping them with their reading, math, writing and homework. They provided the children with resources they needed to assist in their learning such as school supplies like notebooks, pencils, reading books and other materials. Children shared that:

Since Just Love came to my class or my school it’s been fun learning because even though there fun it’s learning too ... and the you know all that stuff it helps kids get ready and they give them like notebooks and stuff so they get ready for the FCAT or SAT or whatever tests they’re taking. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

They help with homework. And teach you some strategies about reading. (Julia, grade 4, female mentee)

Read with us and help us with our math and our reading. (Roger, grade 3, male mentee)

The volunteers also helped the children to get ready for their various tests as well as take the time to celebrate with them when they were finished testing.

When they come they have party with us they celebrate like they celebrate tests. Like after we do tests they come to the class and they do help and they celebrate (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

...they helped bring the grades back up because they give them tips for the FCAT or SAT (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

Learning for the children involved also being educated outside of regular academics. The children learned about places the volunteers travelled and other experiences they had. Stephen reported that:

They help us, help us learn, help us with our FCAT, they give us snack and they also travel many places for us and do many stuff for us. (Stephen, grade 4, male mentee)

Theme 6.2. Academic support (mentors). Even although the children felt volunteers helped them with academics many of the children spoke of how mentors specifically helped them to improve their learning.

He helps me with reading and helps improve my reading level (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

We went to the library and she read books with me and we a she studied multiplication cards with me and she let me get on the computer... she helps me with my multiplication and stuff because
sometimes I’m bad, I’m kinda bad with multiplication but I’m getting better and she help me with my reading too. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

Monique explained it well when she said…

The fact when they are mentors they help kids with their education and learning. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

The mentors helped the children with their academic subjects but also provided the children with strategies to help them. Monique learnt about elapsed time while Julia learnt strategies for reading and writing. Carnell acquired some ways of doing his work, such as going to a “quiet place”. Here are some excerpts from the children voices:

My mentor…she’s been teaching me about like elapsed time like there’s a time in the front and in the back and you have to see how much time it takes to get to the next number and try to get to the next time. She helps me with my timetables and my multiplication. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

…help us with our work and tell us like they use strategies of reading and writing and tell us before the FCAT come and then tell us about it. We read books. They put us in groups. (Julia, grade 4, female mentee)

They help us do work and take us places that be quiet and we help you do your work. (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

Theme 6.3. Social skills. The children developed some social skills such as learning manners, interacting with others and strategies on how to calm down when angry. Dulcie expressed the following:

…I have like a anger issue one day she’ll help me get through it so she’ll tell me strategies how to calm down and she just tells me like ways to calm down if your mad. (Dulcie, grade 3, female mentee)

My favorite thing to do is to really be with them because they are like people that come and play with us each time in school each time were like we need some calm me down…(Jomil, grade 3, male mentee)

Children learnt to talk about problems they have. They knew they could talk to the volunteers about things that may seem inconsequential to thing that happened in their lives that were tragic and they would “help them through it”.

The thing that I like about having a mentor is that they come and see you and they take you… if you have a problem in school, he’ll just talk to you about it for a little bit and just and just solve the problem. (Jomil, grade 3, male mentee)
It's Just Love because how happy it looks and how happy I am and my mentor. And how the way he treats me. And how him and his wife comes there and talk to me about stuff and asks me about how I am in school. (Robby, grade 3, male mentee)

An important element of building social skills is to know how to have a conversation and Monique expressed this clearly:

*That there's always a conversation and like everyone can talk with there mentor like if they're there because sometimes our mentors in my class are there and they’re always talking and I like that because they it’s social and I like social because I like being in a conversation...* (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

**Patterns that Emerged from the Pictures Used in the Photo Elicitation Process**

**Picture most important to children.** When children were asked the question: “Of all of these pictures which one is most important to you? What make this one so important to you?” Sixty percent of the mentees chose the picture of them with their mentor (see Table 4.16).

**Table 4.16.** Percentage of Mentees Who Selected Each Picture as the First One that “Best Showed” What Just Love was like or the Picture that was “Most Important” to them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture Number and Label</th>
<th>First Picture mentees selected that Best Showed what Just Love was like</th>
<th>Picture mentees selected that was most important to them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Field Trip (Zoo)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Christmas Gifts</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Back to School Supplies</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. All Pro Dad's &amp; IMom's Breakfast</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Haircuts for School</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Great American Teach In (Career Day)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Thanksgiving Feast (Classroom Activity)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Community Fair (Face Painting)</td>
<td>20%*</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Pajamas Party</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Tea Party (Classroom Activity)</td>
<td>20%*</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Field Day (Sports Day)</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Mentor and Mentee</td>
<td>15%***</td>
<td>60%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1st Most Prevalent Theme, **2nd Most Prevalent Theme, ***3rd Most Prevalent Theme*
The reasons for choosing the picture Mentor and Mentee as most important varied. Children chose this picture because they were glad to have a mentor for the first time. They chose the picture because they knew their mentor would be there for them when they needed him or her. Another reason for choosing the picture of Mentor and Mentee was that the children saw their mentor as someone who loved them, was a friend, giving and someone they could spend time together with. What children enjoyed were the experiences and relationship they had with their mentor.

**The top three pictures that best shows Just Love to children.** Children were asked in the interviews to choose a picture that best shows Just Love in the order- numbers 1-12. The interview question was stated: “Look at all of these pictures. Which picture do you think best shows what “Just Love” is like. Now give that picture to me. Tell me about the picture.” The top three photos chosen that “Best Showed” Just Love by children were indicative of the experiences the children had as a result of Just Love. These are the Community Fair (Face Painting), Tea Party and Mentor with Mentee (see Table 4.17). Twenty percent of children chose Community Fair (Face Painting) as their first picture that best shows Just Love, 20% chose the Tea Party and 15% of children chose the picture Mentor with Mentee. The commonality in these three pictures was that many of the Just Love people were identifiable because they had on Just Love T-shirts or were all dressed up and it could be clearly seen and they were engaged with the children. Children enjoyed being with the Just Love people. Sharai and Tiffany’s explanation as to why they chose the Community Fair (Face Painting) picture was indicative of what the other children had to say as their reasoning behind choosing this picture:

*Just Love people celebrating with the students and the students are enjoying having the Just Love people.* (Sharai, grade 3, female mentee)

*I like that one because Just Love is painting peoples faces and they bought all... And they bought all that just for us.* (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

The celebrations were what children often said was their favorite thing to do. It made the children happy and they had fun with the volunteers. Monique shared other children’s sentiment about the Tea Party:
I like this one. They’re having a celebration and everyone looks like they’re enjoying it and having a great time. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

I like the celebrations because everyone’s always happy and people nicely and they always like I like the fact that there’s always a conversation and like everyone can talk with their mentor like if they’re there because sometimes our mentors in my class are there and they’re always talking and I like talk. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

The pictures including the Mentor with Mentee picture seemed to depict for the children not only a time of enjoyment being together with Just Love but a feeling of being loved by both the volunteers and the children. Joseph said:

And I think that would be the best picture because you’re showing trust you’re showing love, Just Love. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

Other children concurred:

The favorite thing to do is spend time with my mentor. Because when we spend time like you got like it’s your best friend. (Carnell, grade 3, male mentee)

My favorite thing to do is to really be with them... (Joimil, grade 3, male mentee)

None of the children chose pictures “Back to School Supplies” or “Great American Teach In (Career Day)” as the first picture that “Best Showed” Just Love. In fact Monique who chose the picture “Back to School Supplies” (see Figure 4.21) later in the interview said:

This is a classroom and there is book bags on the table and I think a portable and it’s a classroom and no ones there at all so I don’t think this is talking about Just Love. (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

It would appear that the pictures that showed the children engaging in activities or with the volunteers were the pictures that seemed to stand out more for the children as depicting Just Love. Even although the “Back to School Supplies” did not seem to look like Just Love it was still chosen as the picture being the “Most Important” to children”10% of the time, because as the children said it gave them school supplies for the new school year. Other pictures contained the faces of children and were not shown to protect the privacy of the children.
Satisfactions, Experiences and Recommendations for Improvement of Just Love

In this section, I provide specific or direct answers to the three qualitative research questions in order to show how the qualitative data directly answered the questions and to provide a summary of the qualitative findings.

4. What were students’ perceived satisfactions of the “Just Love” programs?

5. What were students’ experiences as a result of the “Just Love” programs?

6. What suggestions would participants have regarding how to improve the Just Love programs (challenges, recommendations for improvements)?

Students’ perceived satisfactions

Students were asked various interview questions to examine their perceived satisfactions of the Just Love programs. One of the questions asked was “What do you like about Just Love?” (Question asked before photo elicitation). When students responded to this question almost all of the themes were found throughout their compiled answers. The summary of students’ perceived satisfactions are not only answered through this interview question, but also seen throughout as
the children shared their thoughts on Just Love. Children perceived Just Love as satisfying describing

*Just Love as people who are helping, giving, loving and caring.* More than one student shared how they love when the Just Love volunteers come, bring things for them and help them. Many children spoke of the character of the volunteers calling them wonderful, kind, super nice and loving and caring. They liked that the Just Love volunteers treat them and others with respect and that they were trustworthy. Joseph said he consider them to be “somebody you can trust, somebody that you don’t have to run away from or hide away from.”

*Positive feelings* were expressed as children talked about how they appreciated what the volunteers did for them and the *happiness* they brought them. Tiffany’s statement, “That they buy us stuff and we send cards to them when they do” was an example of what some of the children said in terms of showing how they were appreciative of the volunteers. They took the time to send the volunteers cards, and letters to say thank you. The children recognize that much of what the volunteers do for them they do sacrificially and selflessly. They spoke of this with great emphasis on the fact that the volunteers do not need to do any of these things but choose to do so. One child said these pictures he will hold as *memories* even when his mentor is no longer in his life.

Children spoke of the *positive relationships and connectedness* they had with both volunteers and mentors. They valued that there were *reciprocal relationships*, a give and take by both children and volunteers. They saw these caring and supportive adults as *positive role models* who cared not only about how they did in school but also about how they were going to do in their future. They liked that the volunteers came and helped but also that they took *time to spend with them*. *Dependability and consistency* were of importance to the children and seen in their responses. They spoke of how the mentors came consistently, like Nancy said: “Well I like that I get to see my mentor every, maybe on Fridays or Mondays”. Children often spoke of how dependable the Just Love volunteers are. They spoke with confidence saying things like “they will be there for you”, or “they know they would help you” or they do these things “just for us”.

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...When they need help with something they know that that person their mentor that person is going to help them. (Valerie, grade 3, mentee)

I love how they help us and I love how they communicate with us and I love how they travel many miles for us. (Stephen, grade 4, male mentee)

That they are kind to you and they bring you prizes and gifts and there always there for you. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

I like that one because Just Love is painting peoples faces and they bought all that just for us. (Tiffany, grade 3, female mentee)

**Students’ experiences as a result of Just Love**

Children’s experiences as a result of Just Love encompass many of the themes. They had individual, classroom and school wide experiences. They liked that they had holiday celebration and parties with them, did fun stuff such as paint, knitting and sports or classroom activities such as crafts and the children got to help them decorate for the parties. Children also liked that the experiences that involved everyone because it gave them the opportunity to interact with others and spend time with family and friends. Children felt that without Just Love it would be boring or normal and all these experiences, opportunities and things that Just Love has brought them, they would not have had. As a result of Just Love the climate of the classroom and school changed Just Love. It was a nicer, friendlier more exciting place to be and the students felt that they had improved their grades.

Children liked that the Just Love volunteers were supportive of them not just socially but also academically. Children said that they helped them with their homework, math, reading and science and they taught them strategies to help them do better in their school. Afric said: “I like that our mentors come with us and help us with math and science and stuff like that” whilst Monique said that “mentors they help kids with their education and learning”. Although children were satisfied with Just Love as a whole the mentor relationship seemed to be most important to the children. They shard many experiences they had with mentors such as spending time together and developing relationships where children they had someone they could not only trust but that was dependable and consistent.
Student’s recommendations for improvement of Just Love

When children were asked during the interview the question “Is there anything you did not like about Just Love?” they either responded “No”, “There’s nothing that I don’t like about Just Love, nothing” or “No. I pretty much like everything”. They were then asked, “If you could change anything about Just Love what would you change?” Majority of the children responded “Nothing”. Joimil responded, “there is nothing that I want to change. It’s perfect the way it is.” Some children wished the volunteers could come more often or even “that they come everyday and have a party.” Michael recommended that Just Love bring more mentors “so everybody could have a mentor.” Dulcie said she would maybe change the name from ‘Just Love’ to the name ‘Just Love Schools’. She went on further to explain her reasoning behind this change. She said, “because you get it- Just, Love, Schools. Like you just gotta just love schools”. Valerie she liked everything about Just Love:

*I like everything that JL do with us I ain’t got no favorite thing because all of um is my favorite thing.* (Valerie, grade 3, female mentee)

However if she could change anything this is what she would do:

*If I could change anything about JL I would ask them nicely can they go in every class. Can some people can they split up and go to classes and tell kids like what Ruby Bridges had did to get kids to be better and do better things in their lives with their life. So therefore when they grow up they won’t be doing bad crazy stuff.* (Valerie, grade 3, mentee)

Every child said they would like to continue with Just Love. The satisfactions and experiences are the very reason why the children want to continue with Just Love. Sharai and Orland sums it up:

*I’d like to continue being a part of Just Love because they provide a lot of things to help the students and care about us like our parents.* (Sharai, grade 4, female mentee)

They are not just our friends they’re more like family. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

Triangulation of the Data

A previous study (Henry et. al., 2012), examining the perceptions of teachers and volunteers involved in this faith-based school-family-community partnership program, Just Love at Charisma ES
was used to triangulate the data. Henry et al., (2012) used data collected from teacher and volunteer surveys to evaluate the impact of the Just Love programs. These researchers discovered that when teachers and volunteers were asked to share their perceptions of the Just Love partnership at Charisma ES from 2010-2012, teachers and volunteer’s responses were very similar to the children’s responses in this current study. The themes emerging from the teachers and volunteers perceptions are shared only as they align with the themes emerging from the children’s perceptions.

**Teachers’ and volunteers’ perceived satisfactions**

Henry et al. (2012) found that teachers and volunteers were very satisfied with the “Just Love” Programs. Teachers and volunteers said that Just Love provided *resources* and *support* for teachers and students, *one-on-one adult interaction for students*, *consistency* for all involved. Here is what one teacher shared followed by a child’s view on consistency:

*Teaching is a thankless job and we rarely are acknowledged for our hard work, but Just Love has helped us enormously and been consistent! So many people from the community come and go. We appreciate whatever contributions they make, but it is so admirable and refreshing that Just Love has stayed! Our kids ache for consistency and familiar faces.* (Teacher)

*She comes mostly every Wednesday and Thursday well she’ supposed to come Thursday but she comes Wednesday too.* (Barbara, grade 3, female mentee)

*Love and care* was one of the “biggest gifts” everyone received. Volunteers called it “extravagant love”. Teachers called it “unconditional love”. Children said, “Love is very unexplainable”. An example of a volunteer and a child’s expression of *love and care* as well as the kind of relationships both children and volunteers enjoy is seen below:

*I feel so blessed to serve. It’s an indescribable joy. Being at (Charisma ES) are the best hours in my week. I feel the children’s love for me. When my work gets tough, I often see a picture a child has made for me or think of their sweet smiles and I have the strength to get past my insignificant problem.* (Volunteer)

*We as we all know the Just Love is the people who donate things to Just Elementary for the love, just because like just because they care for you. Love is very unexplainable.* (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)
A theme that was prevalent in teachers, volunteers and children’s responses about Just Love was the positive relationships that ensued because of Just Love. The following are examples of how a child, volunteer and a teacher all value these relationships.

_She is really nice and kind to me and she treats me like I’m her daughter and what I like about her is she treats other people how she wants to be treated too and every time she sees me she always has a smile one her face which is what I like about her._ (Monique, grade 3, female mentee)

_Every visit, I walk away with treasured memories._ Many visits I walk away with notes or pictures that the children have given me. I have put many on my cube walls at work or in a special notebook at home where I’m saving their gifts of love. These are such an encouragement to me. (Volunteer)

_Sometimes the smallest piece of appreciation as a teacher is what we often do not get at inner-city schools, but Just Love is on top of it and we feel that!_ (Teacher)

Volunteers said that they were grateful for the opportunity to serve in an inner city school where they offer and receive much encouragement. Pertinent to academic related outcomes, teachers shared that students have come to recognize that learning has a purpose and are becoming more confident. Volunteers shared that teachers have indicated that they were visible improvements in academics, attendance and behavior.

**Teachers’ and volunteers’ experiences as a result of Just Love**

Themes that emerged from teachers and volunteers as they shared their experiences as result of Just Love were similar to children’s shared experiences. Both teachers and volunteers spoke of new experiences and opportunities that “Just Love” gave them that they did not have before. Volunteers shared that their eyes were opened to some of the challenges children at-risk and teachers working in these schools face. They were thankful for the opportunity to make a difference but they lives were impacted greatly as well.
“They provided a box of Valentine’s cards for each child! It was wonderful to watch so many students have an opportunity to choose which ones they wanted to give and then not only share with their classmates, but also with other people in their community and home...even their adopted class. Many students had never been able to experience the agape love they were able to share with each other.” (Teacher)

Just Love volunteers provided resources that teachers are often unable to supply as well gave them and their students the support and extra attention that became a motivator for learning. In this previous study teachers described the school and classroom climate as much improved. Some describing words used were- inviting, loving, supportive, accepting, compassion and respect, positive, pleasant and consistency.

“Just Love provided our class with so much more experiences that goes beyond what I can provide as the classroom teacher. For example, each month a representative from our Classroom adoption come in and do an academic lesson. They have supported the class academically in reading, writing and math.” (Teacher)

Teachers’ and volunteers’ recommendations for improvement of Just Love

When asked if they would change anything, the teachers and volunteer spoke of the need for more mentors and volunteers. The children also voiced this recommendation.

The biggest challenge I have seen is for the students who are not mentored. I think they feel left out and are hurt... (Volunteer)

...More mentors so everybody could have a mentor. (Shachia, grade 3, female mentee)

Summary of Quantitative Findings Relative to Student Outcomes

In Table 4.16 is presented a summary of the quantitative results along with the research questions, variables, and data analyses. Students in Charisma ES made significantly greater gains in reading than students in Joseph ES on the FAIR assessment between assessment periods 1 and 3 in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. In both of these years, students in Charisma scored lower in reading (as measured by the FAIR) than students at Joseph in the first assessment period and higher than Joseph in the third assessment period.
Regarding disciplinary referrals, both the total number of disciplinary referrals and average number of disciplinary referrals per student decreased dramatically at Charisma from 2009-2013. In contrast, both the total number of disciplinary referrals and average number of disciplinary referrals per student at Joseph ES increased yearly from 2009-2013. Similarly, there was also a strong downward trend in the total and average number of students who received discipline referrals in Charisma ES and a stable trend in the total and average number of students who received discipline referrals in Joseph ES from 2009-2013.

Attendance rates increased significantly between 2009-2010 and 2011-2012 and between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 for both schools. In addition, attendance rates differed significantly between the two schools with students in Joseph Elementary School having higher attendance rates than students in Charisma Elementary School.

On average, both adopted and non-adopted classes made gains in reading on the FAIR assessment from assessment period 1 to assessment period 3 in each of the three years. In addition, adopted classes appeared to have higher scores on the FAIR in 2011-2012 than non-adopted classes.

Number of referrals dropped each year for both adopted and non-adopted classes. Further, although adopted classes had a slightly higher average number of referrals in 2010-2011, the average number of disciplinary referrals per class was lower for adopted classes than for non-adopted classes in 2011-2012, one academic year after the Just Love partnership program was implemented. In addition, the average number of students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES were initially higher in adopted classrooms than non-adopted classrooms in 2010-2011, but were lower for adopted classes in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Concerning attendance, there were no significant differences in attendance rates between students in adopted and non-adopted classes at Charisma ES during 2010-2013.
Table 4.17. Quantitative Research Questions, Data Analysis Procedures, and Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Data Analyses</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences between schools (for each year, 2009-2013)</td>
<td>School (Charisma E.S., Joseph E.S.); Time of Test (AP1, AP2)</td>
<td>Academic scores − Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3 from 2010-2013</td>
<td>Descriptives, 3 Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Schools) for each year, 2009-2013</td>
<td>Charisma ES made significant higher mean gains than Joseph ES in reading in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. In both of these years, students in Charisma ES scored lower in AP1 than students at Joseph and higher in AP3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School (Charisma E.S., Joseph E.S.); Time (for each year, 2009-2013)</td>
<td>Behavior − Total number of discipline referrals 2009-2013 − Total number of students who received discipline referrals 2009-2013</td>
<td>Descriptives</td>
<td>Both total and average number of disciplinary referrals decreased yearly at Charisma and increased yearly at Joseph from 2009-2013. Downward trend in the total and average number of students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES and a slight upward trend at Joseph ES from 2009-2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School (Charisma E.S., Joseph E.S.); Time of Attendance (for each year, 2009-2013)</td>
<td>Attendance rates − Average attendance rates 2009-2013</td>
<td>Descriptives, One Mixed ANOVA (Mean Differences Between and Within Schools)</td>
<td>Attendance rates increased significantly within both schools in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 compared to 2009-2010. Students in Joseph ES had significantly higher attendance rates than students in Charisma ES. However, Charisma ES had a higher rate of growth in attendance rates than Joseph ES.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.17 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>Data Analyses</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mean differences between adopted &amp; non-adopted (for each year, 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Group (Adopted, non-adopted); Time of Test (AP1, AP3)</td>
<td>Academic scores</td>
<td>Descriptives, 3 Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Classrooms)</td>
<td>Students within adopted and non-adopted classrooms scored significantly higher on the FAIR in AP3 relative to AP1 every year. In 2011-2012, students in adopted classrooms scored significantly higher than students in non-adopted classrooms on the FAIR.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Descriptives,</td>
<td>Students in adopted classrooms had a lower average number of referrals than those in non-adopted in 2011-2012. In 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, average number of students who received discipline referrals in adopted classes were lower than for non-adopted classes.</td>
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<td>Total number of discipline referrals</td>
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<td>Total number of students who received discipline referrals</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance rates</td>
<td>Descriptives, One Mixed ANOVA (Mean Differences Between and Within Classrooms)</td>
<td>No significant differences in attendance rates between students in adopted and non-adopted classes at Charisma ES during 2010-2013.</td>
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<td>Average attendance rates</td>
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<td>Mean differences between mentored &amp; non-mentored by level (for each year, 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Group (Mentored, non-mentored); Time of Test (AP1, AP3)</td>
<td>Academic scores Reading scores on the FAIR for AP1 and AP3</td>
<td>Descriptives, 3 Mixed ANOVAS (Mean Differences Between and Within Groups); Paired T-tests</td>
<td>Both mentored and non-mentored students made significant gains in reading from AP1 to AP3 in each of the three years. In 2010-2011, non-mentored students scored significantly higher than mentored students on the FAIR.</td>
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<td>Group (Mentored, non-mentored); Time (for each year, 2010-2013)</td>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>Descriptives</td>
<td>The average number of discipline referrals received by mentored students dropped drastically and was three times lower than those of non-mentored students in 2012-2013 compared to 2010-2011.  The average number mentored students who received disciplinary referrals were lower for mentored than non-mentored students for all three academic years from 2010-2013.</td>
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<td>Group (Mentored, non-mentored)</td>
<td>Attendance rates – Average attendance rates</td>
<td>Descriptives, Propensity score matching, Paired T-tests</td>
<td>Mentored students had significantly higher attendance than non-mentored students in 2011-2012.</td>
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<td>Mean differences prior to and during mentoring by number of years of mentoring</td>
<td>Number of years mentored</td>
<td>Attendance rates – Average attendance rates the year prior to mentoring; – Average attendance rates during last year of mentoring</td>
<td>Descriptives,</td>
<td>As years of mentoring increased, attendance rates increased.</td>
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During 2010-2011 and 2012-2012, mentored students at Charisma made significant improvements in their reading comprehension as measured by the FAIR assessment from assessment period 1 to assessment period. Further, when taken all together, students regardless of mentoring status, scored significantly higher on the FAIR assessment from assessment period 1 to assessment period 3 in each of the three years.

Regarding discipline referrals, mentored students had a dramatically lower average number of disciplinary referrals than non-mentored students in 2012-2013, just two years after the Just Love partnership was implemented. The average number of disciplinary referrals was three times lower in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 and half those in 2011-2012 than in 2010-2011. Further, compared to non-mentored students, the average number of mentored students who received discipline referrals at Charisma ES was lower for all three academic years from 2010-2013.

When compared to non-mentored students, mentored students had significantly higher attendance than non-mentored students in 2011-2012, just one year after the Just Love partnership began. Further, attendance appeared to have a positive relation to the number of years students were mentored. After one year of mentoring attendance rates increased 1.7 points. After two years of mentoring attendance rates increased 5.3 points, and after three years of mentoring attendance rates increased 8 points.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter presents summaries and discussion of the quantitative and qualitative findings in the light of existing research. The limitations of this study are also presented followed by the implications of the study for practice, training, evaluation, policy, and future research. The purpose of this study was to evaluate a faith-based school-family-community partnership- Just Love, between a large suburban church and a Title 1, urban elementary school, Charisma Elementary School. This study examined the differences in student outcomes (i.e., academic, behavior and attendance) between Charisma ES and another matching school, Joseph Elementary School, without a faith-based school-family-community partnership. Student outcomes (i.e., academic, behavior and attendance) within Charisma E.S. were also examined to determine whether Just Love may have had an effect on adopted classrooms compared to non-adopted classrooms and mentored students compared to non-mentored students. In addition, the study also examined the perceived satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations of Just Love through the voices of the children served by the partnership. While this study was not experimental in design and cannot establish cause and effect patterns, this study evaluated the effectiveness of the faith-based school-family-community partnership comprehensive programs (i.e., adoption, mentoring and rewards), thus providing insights about the influence of a faith-based partnership on students and their academic-related outcomes and increasing knowledge about faith-based partnerships with schools.
Discussion and Interpretation of Findings Relative to Student Outcomes

In the current study, comparisons of Charisma ES to Joseph ES, of adopted classrooms to non-adopted classrooms, and mentored to students to non-mentored students on academic, behavior, and attendance outcomes suggest that the Just Love partnership program contributed to positive academic, behavioral, and attendance outcomes. Below the results regarding first the matching schools, then adopted and non-adopted classrooms, and finally mentored and non-mentored students and their influence on the student outcomes are discussed.

Differences in Academic, Behavior, and Attendance Outcomes Between Matching Schools

Charisma ES started out with a Florida Accountability school grade of F in 2009-10 and improved to a C in 2010-11 and 2012-13. This grade decreased in 2012-13 to a D. In comparison, Joseph ES had a grade of D from 2009-2012 and a grade of F in 2012-2013. These patterns are somewhat reflected in the academic outcomes assessed in this study. When compared to third through fifth grade students in Joseph ES, students in Charisma ES made significantly greater gains in reading on the FAIR assessment between assessment periods 1 and 3 in both years after the Just Love program was implemented, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Further, in both of these years, students in Charisma ES scored lower in reading than students at Joseph ES in the first assessment period and higher than Joseph ES in the third assessment period.

Although we cannot say that Just Love, the faith-based school-family-community partnership was solely responsible for improvement in Charisma ES academically, the results of this study suggest that the Just Love partnership program contributed to these improvements in student outcomes. The improvements in reading outcomes in Charisma ES, a school with a faith-based school-family-community partnership, when compared to Joseph ES, a closely matching school without the partnership, supports the feasibility of this conclusion. High poverty schools often reap positive student outcomes through school-family-community partnerships (Bryan, 2005; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Scheurich, 1998). Furthermore,
research on faith-based school-family-community partnerships indicates that they contribute to positive student achievement in low-income high poverty schools like Charisma ES (Tripses & Scroggs, 2009). The influence of the Just Love program on reading achievement may be due to the academic support that the program provided. This was a major theme that emerged from the interviews with the children. Further, based on the previous study of the teachers’ and volunteers’ perceptions of the Just Love program (Henry et al., 2012), academic support also emerged as a key theme. Teachers felt that the academic support received from the Just Love volunteers allowed them to focus on teaching and to better meet the academic needs of the children.

In this study, behavior outcomes comprised total and average number of discipline referrals and total and average number of students who received discipline referrals. Both the total and average number of discipline referrals dropped dramatically at Charisma ES from 2009-2010 to 2010-2011 when the Just Love program was implemented and continued to drop every year after that. In contrast, the total and average number of discipline referrals were much lower in Joseph ES in 2009-2010, but were slightly above those of Charisma ES in 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Similar trends presented in both Charisma ES and Joseph ES for both the total and average number of students who received discipline referrals. There was a strong downward trend in number of students who received discipline referrals in Charisma ES and a stable trend in number of students who received discipline referrals in Joseph ES from 2009-2013. Although the average number of students who received referrals was identical at both schools in 2012-2013, the average number of students who received referrals at Charisma ES demonstrated the greater decline.

A startling contrast in this study is the high number of discipline referrals Charisma ES had in 2009-2010, the year before Just Love was started. Equally startling is the dramatic drop in referrals from 2010-2011 after Just Love was implemented. Further, by 2012-2013, discipline referrals at Charisma ES had fallen below those of Joseph ES. Taken together these results suggest that Just Love partnership program helped to reduce discipline referrals and improve behavior in Charisma ES. Previous research on
school-family-community partnerships has demonstrated that school-family-community partnerships reduce discipline referrals and suspensions regardless of previous discipline rates (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002). Faith-based partnership programs like Just Love are a viable approach to reducing discipline referrals in schools (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012). The children in this study reported that the Just Love volunteers provided them with social support. They said that the volunteers helped them with anger management and how to talk about their problems and interact more positively with others. This social support coupled with positive relationships and school climate, may be what contributed to the dramatic decrease in discipline referrals. Indeed, research on discipline supports the view that social support and positive school climate leads to a reduction in behavior problems (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005).

Although attendance rates in Charisma ES were lower than those in Joseph ES overall, it is notable that each year after the introduction of the Just Love program, attendance rates in Charisma ES rose. Indeed, in 2011-12 and 2012-13 the attendance rates at Charisma ES were significantly higher than in 2009-10, the year prior to the introduction of the Just Love program. Further, attendance rates at Charisma ES increased 1.88 points and attendance rates at Joseph ES increased 0.62 points between 2009 and 2013. Essentially, attendance rates at Charisma ES increased three times those of Joseph ES’. The differences between schools are clear, but it is possible that Charisma ES may have had lower attendance for years. The higher rate of growth in attendance rates observed in Charisma ES seems to suggest that a positive link is there. Indeed, a number of studies have found a positive link between school-family-community partnerships and attendance (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002, Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Sheldon, 2007). In longitudinal studies of school attendance, the authors found that (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002, Sheldon & Epstein, 2004) school-family-community partnerships decrease chronic absenteeism and increase student attendance rates. The success may have been because the partnership practices directly targeted student attendance.
Differences in Academic, Behavior, and Attendance Outcomes Between Adopted and Non-Adopted Classrooms

While schools volunteers are popular in schools (Brent, 2000), adopted classrooms represent a new approach to volunteering. Classroom adoption (i.e., when a group of volunteers from the faith-based organization adopt a classroom in the Charisma ES) is an integral component of the Just Love program. These volunteers serve the students and teachers and seek to provide them with resources and supports. Comparisons of student outcomes in adopted and non-adopted classrooms revealed that adopted classrooms contribute to some positive student outcomes for students.

When examining reading achievement in Charisma ES alone, in 2011-2012, one year after the Just Love program, students in adopted classrooms scored significantly higher than students in non-adopted classrooms in reading scores on the FAIR. Further, students regardless of whether they were in adopted or non-adopted classrooms made significant reading achievement gains between assessment period 1 and assessment period 3 in each of the three academic years 2010-2013. These results indicate that adopted classrooms as a partnership strategy can contribute to positive academic outcomes for students. In addition, the within group results suggest that the Just Love partnership program may contribute to school wide reading gains for all three years above and beyond the effect for adopted classrooms. The partnership was designed as a comprehensive program with three components including adopted classrooms and mentoring so as to support students individually, in the classroom and school wide. The comprehensive nature of the program may isolate school wide effects more readily than classroom level effects. While one researcher found no significant effect of volunteers on reading and math achievement, he concluded that the school volunteers may have been too few and their influence too small to affect school-wide achievement (Brent, 2000). However, findings in the current study suggest that the classroom adoption approach to volunteering appears to yield better results for students. It is possible that a classroom adoption approach where a unified body of adults with a common purpose adopts an entire classroom may provide enough volunteers with enough influence to affect academic
gains. Indeed, the qualitative findings in this study suggest that classroom adoption provided the students with greater academic support. In Henry et al., (2012) evaluation of the Just Love partnership, academic support emerged as a central theme from the analysis of teachers’ and volunteers’ perceived satisfactions and experiences with the program. In addition, the classroom adoption component of the Just Love program also provides important support in helping students improve their behavior. One year after the Just Love partnership program was implemented, students in adopted classrooms had a drastically lower average number of referrals than those in non-adopted in 2011-2012. While average number of referrals per classroom was slightly higher in adopted classes when compared to non-adopted classes in 2012-2013, the average number of students who received discipline referrals in adopted classes was lower than those in non-adopted classes in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. These results support the adopted classroom approach to school volunteering as a viable approach for improving behavior in schools. The qualitative findings indicate that the children looked forward to the volunteers spending time in their classroom and gained valuable social support from these positive role models. The children report that both the school and classroom climates improved. In addition, the teachers’ reported that the children were eager to see the volunteers and that the children’s behavior improved as a result (Henry et al., 2012). Teachers also said that the volunteers gave them support in working with the children on this challenging journey and took some of the pressure off of them. Further, findings in Henry et al., (2012) evaluation suggest that the Just Love partnership helped to boost teacher morale and teachers’ perceptions of student behavior and attitudes. It is possible that changes in teachers’ perceptions and expectations of the children may have had a positive influence on discipline referrals in this study. As mentioned previously, positive school and classroom climate are linked to reduced discipline problems and disorder in schools (Gottfredson, Gottfredson, Payne, & Gottfredson, 2005; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

When considering attendance rates in Charisma ES alone, there were no significant differences in average attendance rates between students in adopted and non-adopted classes over the three academic years 2010-2013. However, it is notable that there was a slight upward trend in attendance rates for
adopted classes. Given that the average attendance rate for Charisma ES was 91.35 in 2009-2010 and that attendance rates rose each year after that to a 2.59 point difference in 2012-2013, the upward trend in attendance rates suggests that if student level data were available for the 2009-2010 school year for each of the students in adopted and non-adopted classes, the data may have indicated some significant differences in attendance rates when compared to 2009-2010.

**Differences in Academic, Behavior, and Attendance Outcomes Between Mentored and Non-Mentored Students**

In the current study, both mentored and non-mentored students at Charisma ES made significant within group gains in reading achievement from assessment period 1 to assessment period 3 in each of the three years from 2010-2013. Interestingly, only in 2010-2011 did non-mentored students score significantly higher on the FAIR than mentored students. These results indicate that mentored students were performing at the same level of non-mentored students. Given that mentored students at Charisma ES are often chosen for mentorship because they face academic and other challenges, the fact that they had lower achievement in the first year of the program, and that these gaps were closed in the second and third year of the program indicates that mentoring may have had a positive influence on mentored students’ academic outcomes. Mentoring programs are found in numerous schools especially in elementary schools (Karcher & Herrera, 2007; Rhodes & Dubois, 2006). Various school-based mentoring programs have been found to be beneficial for students on a number of academic outcomes (Zimmerman, Bigenheimer, & Notaro, 2002). The results of this study support the beneficial nature of school-based mentoring programs within the context of a faith-based school-family-community partnership program.

Concerning behavior outcomes, the average number of discipline referrals received by mentored students dropped drastically after the Just Love program was implemented for all three academic years from 2010-2013. The average number of discipline referrals received were three times lower in 2012-2013 than in 2010-2011 and were lower for mentored students in 2012-2013 than for non-mentored
students. Further, the average number of mentored students who received disciplinary referrals was lower for mentored than non-mentored students for all three academic years from 2010-2013. These results also suggest that the mentoring component of the Just Love program play an important role of supporting students with behavior challenges. Previous research has indicated that programs that improve discipline emphasize caring adult-student relationships and school connectedness rather than punishment and misbehavior (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). The qualitative findings in this study support this previous research as well as the earlier study of Just Love (Henry et al., 2012). In both studies of the Just Love program children and teachers alike reported that mentors brought consistent and caring adult relationships that helped the children feel listened to, valued, and supported in school.

Concerning attendance outcomes, when compared to non-mentored students, mentored students had significantly higher attendance than non-mentored students in 2011-2012 just one year after the Just Love partnership began. Also, when differences between attendance rates for mentored students and the number of years of mentoring, it is notable that attendance rates increased with the number of years students were mentored. More specifically, after one year of mentoring attendance rates increased 1.7 points; after two years of mentoring, attendance rates increased 5.3 points; and after three years of mentoring attendance rates increased 8 points. Since many of the mentored students were chosen for the mentoring program because of attendance problems, these results indicate that mentored students are benefiting from the mentoring component of Just Love. It is notable that the mentoring program is the only component of the Just Love partnership that resulted in significantly improved attendance outcomes for students although attendance trends overall showed that attendance rates increased each year from 2010-2013. Further, the mentoring program is the only component that appeared to impact all three outcomes, academic, behavior, and attendance outcomes. These results suggest that mentoring may be especially beneficial for students at-risk for academic, behavior, and attendance challenges, especially when undergirded by a comprehensive faith-based school-family-community partnership program. This is consistent with the mentoring literature that highlights the wide-reaching academic effects of mentoring
Indeed, the qualitative findings of this study highlight the importance of the mentors to the students.

**Discussion and Interpretations of the Findings Emerging from Students’ Satisfactions, Experiences and Recommendations for Just Love**

Just Love was designed to provide love, care, and supportive adult relationships and service to the teachers, students, and parents of Charisma ES through a comprehensive three pronged program. Prior studies were conducted to examine the perceptions of the teachers of Charisma ES and the perceptions of the Just Love volunteers (Henry et al., 2012). Even although the Just Love program was designed for the children, no prior evaluation was conducted to examine children’s perceptions. This current study examined children’s perceptions of Just Love by allowing them to share their satisfactions, experiences and recommendations for Just Love over the three years of its implementation, 2010-2013.

Children were interviewed through a process of photo elicitation whereby they were able to examine pictures that were representative of the Just Love program and share their own views about the impact of Just Love. The pictures acted as retrieval cues for the children and resulted in rich descriptions. Children’s voices were captured in the transcripts and excerpts were coded according to the patterns that materialized from what each mentee had to say. Themes emerged from these codes and were then combined into six categories. The categories and themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the interview data represented the perceptions, satisfactions, experiences, and recommendations for improvement concerning the Just Love partnership program. The six categories were (a) perceptions of Just Love, (b) positive feelings, (c) positive relationships and connectedness, (d) classroom and school climate, (e) experiences, and (f) support and resources.

Above and beyond the satisfaction and experiences that Just Love produced for the students, the findings from the thematic analysis revealed that Just Love, this faith-based school-family-community
partnership, provided a number of protective factors known to foster resilience (Benard, 1997, 2004) and a number of developmental assets that reduce maladaptive and risky behaviors of children (Benson & Scales, 2009; Sesma et al., 2013). Protective factors are the processes that foster resilience reducing the negative effects of stress and adversity and decreasing the likelihood of negative outcomes (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013). Developmental assets are “a set of interrelated experiences, relationships, skills and values that are known to enhance a broad range of youth outcomes and are assumed similarly for all youth” (Sesma et al., 2013, p 428). In this chapter, I discuss each category and accompanying themes in light of the existing research that illustrate their relationship to the protective factors and developmental assets. Captured in Table 5.1 below are the connections between the categories and themes that emerged from the data and their link to the protective factors that foster resilience and the developmental assets that facilitate positive youth development.

**Category 1: Perceptions of Just Love**

Children spoke frequently of Just Love as people who came to the school and not only helped them, but were very giving. The children felt loved and cared for by the Just Love volunteers. Further, the children felt affirmed by the volunteers, felt like they could overcome obstacles in their lives and think better of themselves, and felt like they mattered and were valuable to Just Love volunteers and mentors. Earlier research on faith-based school-family-community partnerships supports caring as a major element in the adult relationships with children served by the partnerships (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009). In these studies (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009), principals of school, faith-based leaders, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders all identified caring relationships with supportive adults as a positive outcome of these partnerships. Indeed, loving and caring environments are essential to creating successful schools for students in urban elementary school (Scheurich, 1998). Caring and loving adults reinforce students’ academic performance and behavior, and set high realistic expectations for them (Williams & Bryan, 2013) and lead to students trusting and
respecting these adults (Stipek, 2006). The extensive research on resilience has identified caring and supportive adult relationships as an integral protective factor that fosters resilience in children (Benard, 1997, 2004; Bryan, 2005). As a result of the loving and caring the students experienced from the Just Love volunteers, they expressed feeling valued by the adults. The theme, loving and caring, is linked to the developmental asset of empowerment, which encompasses youth feeling valued by the adults and community around them (Benson & Scales, 2009; Sesma et al., 2013).

**Category 2: Positive Feelings**

The second category was developed from children expressing their feelings towards the Just Love volunteers. Children were appreciative of the volunteers for selflessly giving of their time and gifts without hesitation. They spoke often and with great emphasis about the fact that the volunteers do not need to do any of these things but choose to do so. One child said these pictures he will hold as memories even when his mentor is no longer in his life. They not only had enjoyable moments with the volunteers, but they remembered past experiences favorably and felt these were memories that they could take with them in their future.

**Category 3: Positive Relationships and Connectedness**

A central category that emerged from this study was positive relationships and connectedness. A great deal of the children’s satisfaction came from the relationships and connectedness that Just Love afforded them. They saw these caring and supportive adults as positive role models who cared not only about how they did in school, but also about how they were going to do in their future. These relationships were beneficial to both the children and the volunteers. The children valued these reciprocal relationships, a give and take by both children and volunteers. These relationships provided the children served by the Just Love program with the opportunity of spending time together with the volunteers both
inside and outside of the classroom. They especially valued one-on-one time with their mentors. In previous research on faith-based school-family-community partnerships in Philadelphia schools, principals identified the individual attention that children received from mentors and volunteers as a positive impact of these partnerships (Maluk, Hartmann, Getz, Mitchell, Liu, & Parnes, 2008). The children in the current study similarly benefited from the individual attention the volunteers and mentors gave them. The children spoke with great emotion about the fact that their mentors were dependable and consistent and they could rely on them. These findings suggest that the Just Love partnership created protective factors that foster resilience in the children such as “consistent caregivers” (Naglieri, LeBuffe, & Shapirpo, 2013, p.263) who provide caring adult relationships (Benard, 1997, 2004; Bryan, 2005). Further, the Just Love partnership provided an important external developmental asset, adult role models, who model positive responsible behavior and provide boundaries and high expectations for children (Benson & Scales, 2009; Sesma et al., 2013).

**Category 4: Classroom and School Climate.**

Classroom and school climate changed as a result of Just Love. Children noted the change in their classroom such as, children’s attitudes about schoolwork being more positive, and even although they did lots of fun things, they said that they were learning and behaving better, and that children were friendlier, not boring, and nicer. The volunteers provided support to the children both in and outside of the classroom enhancing both the classroom and school climate. Further, the children seem to feel more bonded or connected to their school. According to Naglieri, LeBuffe, and Shapirpo (2013), protective factors include a positive school climate. Teachers believe that a safe school environment helps students to be more resilient (Howard & Johnson, 2002). When students experience caring and encouraging school climates, they feel more bonded or connected to their school and they are less likely to engage in risky or maladaptive (Blum, 2005). School bonding facilitates children’s academic achievement and helps them overcome life’s challenges (Bryan et al., 2012). Research on partnerships indicates that school-family-
community partnerships can help to provide safer school climates and help children feel more connected to their school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Findings of this study suggest that faith-based school-family-community partnerships like the Just Love partnership can be successful in providing the protective factors and developmental assets regarding a positive classroom and school climate. The volunteers of Just Love appeared to enrich the classroom and school climate and as a result students seemed to feel more bonded or connected to their schools.

**Category 5: Experiences**

The fifth category, *Experiences* encompassed three themes. The relationships with the volunteers and mentors were sources of valuable *experiences* and *opportunities* that the children would not typically have. Whether it was helping the volunteers decorate a classroom for party or doing crafts together with volunteers, children were engaged in celebrations and *activities* that they enjoyed. Just Love planned many *Gatherings for Everyone* that involved teachers, students, parents and volunteers such as the Community Fair (face painting) and Haircuts for School, All Pro Dads and IMoms breakfast. All these plus *new experiences* provided children with *opportunities* to do new things such as a field trip or having a salad for the first time. For some children not only was the experience a first time experience, but also may not have happened without Just Love such as having a mentor or a birthday celebration or even a gift Macy’s diamond earrings.

Providing students with opportunities for meaningful participation in their school and communities is an important protective factor that fosters resilience in children helping children to become competent and succeed in spite of their circumstances (Benard, 1997, 2004; Bryan, 2005). Indeed, programs that provide opportunities for children to have healthy, constructive activities outside the home are important factors for resilience (Howard & Johnson, 2000; Williams & Bryan, 2013). The findings in the current study are consistent with previous research that indicates that faith-based organizations help create school-family-community partnerships that provide numerous opportunities,
experiences, and services that meet the social and emotional needs for children (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Maluk et al., 2008; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009).

**Category 6: Support and Resources.**

The sixth and final category was *Support and Resources.* The children identified the volunteers and mentors as a source of *academic and social support* for them. The children were thankful to have caring and supportive adults help them with their reading, math, writing and homework. One child shared that Just love provided them with resources that parents could not afford such as school supplies and book bags. The social support for children included anger management skills as well as having someone there to be able to listen and give advice. These findings are consistent with research that indicates that faith-based partnerships help enhance student achievement, help schools meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and provide numerous services that facilitate students’ academic, social, and behavior outcomes (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Maluk et al., 2008; Tripses & Scroggs, 2009). In a study of a faith-based school-family-community partnership, Tripses and Scroggs (2009) identified collaborative leadership, renewed community, and poverty resources as key ingredients and benefits of the partnerships. Poverty resources are the resources, social capital, connections, and “hidden rules of class” that volunteers and mentors provide for children and their families. Indeed, faith-based organizations are key sources of social capital for children (Maluk et al., 2008; Miller & Engel, 2011). Just Love volunteers provided social networks that provided integral *resources and support* for the children.

**Students’ Satisfactions, Experiences and Recommendations for Improvement of Just Love.**

Themes although overlapping truly indicative of what children had to say about their satisfactions, experiences with Just Love. Themes representing children’s satisfactions with Just Love were: *described as people, helping, giving, loving and caring, appreciation, happiness, memories,*
reciprocal relationships, positive role models, spending time with them, dependable and consistent.
Themes representing children’s experiences with Just Love were: celebration and activities, gatherings for everyone, new experiences and opportunities, spending time together, dependable and consistent, classroom and school climate, academic and social support.

Although the children in the current study did not want to change anything about the Just Love program, a few children made some recommendations. These recommendations once again highlight the value of the mentors and volunteers to the children. They said that they would increase the number of mentors and have the volunteers come more often. Some children recommended that Just Love volunteers go into every classroom and encourage and inspire the children “like Ruby Bridges did” to make positive choices in their lives so that, as they grow up, they would not make bad decisions and could therefore have better lives.

In triangulating the data with a previous study evaluating teachers and children’s perception of Just Love (Henry et al., 2012), the similarity between the themes for teachers, volunteers, and the children emerged. When discussing the impact of Just Love themes connected to teachers’ responses, they were: resources, support, one-on-one with adult, consistency, love and care, positive relationships. The themes emerging from the volunteers’ responses were: new experiences and opportunities, classroom and school climate, resources and support.

Limitations
The faith-based partnership for this study was implemented in only one school. There was no control or random assignment to schools, thus, limiting the generalizability of the results. I attempted to control for pre-existing differences and other confounding variables by selecting a matching school without a faith-based partnership to compare to Charisma ES. However, this design cannot control for all of the confounding variables. For example, although the school administration reported that Joseph ES
did not have any similar partnership programs, it is possible that the children may have benefited from mentoring or other programs outside of the school. Future research on faith-based partnerships should use an experimental design utilizing a control school to control for pre-existing differences among students and confounding variables.

Some challenges occurred with school and student data. Although both the school district and the schools provided access to necessary student and school data, the data were affected by attrition due to a high mobility rate at Charisma ES. In addition, the attendance data excluded teachers whose classroom size was considered too small; therefore, some teachers and their students are missing from the data. This led to complications due to missing data and mismatched data, which sometimes made it impossible for me to compare students across years in some cases. To compound the issue, as soon as students leave the school, their data move with them and are no longer available. Another limitation was that the 2009-2010 baseline data were not available for most of the student outcomes (e.g., reading achievement). Therefore, the student outcomes after the implementation of the Just Love partnership could not be compared to student outcomes prior to the start of the program. Consequently, it is possible that some changes in student outcomes may have occurred that the data were not able to reveal. In addition, some data were only available at the school level (e.g., discipline referrals) and so did not allow for inferential analyses. In future research on faith-based school-family-community partnerships examining student outcomes, it would be best for partners and researchers to administer their own pre-tests and post-tests to collect data on student outcomes. Partnerships should have a plan for data management and collection that tracks individual student data over time to avoid challenges with missing data and inadequate data.

Finally, greater opportunity for researcher bias may have existed because the researcher (the evaluator) was a previous employee of Charisma ES, and also a member of the faith-based organization. She also developed and coordinated the Just Love partnership program. However using the Model of Collaborative Evaluation (MCE) made it possible to engage school and university stakeholders in collecting and analyzing the data. This reduced the opportunities for researcher bias.
Table 5.1. Categories and Themes Aligned with the Protective Factors and Developmental Assets Theoretical Frameworks

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<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Just Love</td>
<td>Described as people- what the children know as Just Love</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helping- the volunteers assist in ways that make things more pleasant or easier to deal with</td>
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<td>Positive Values- Values helping and caring for others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Giving- the volunteers give something that is valued or needed</td>
<td>Caring Adult Relationships- convey loving support to students by listening to students and validating their feelings, and by demonstrating kindness, compassion, and respect (Higgins, 1994; Meier, 1995).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Loving and Caring- the volunteers show the children that they matter and are valuable in a loving and caring way</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive Values- Values helping and caring for others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Empowerment- Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive feelings of Just Love</td>
<td>Appreciation- the children understand and are grateful for the volunteers giving up what they consider important and valuable in order to help them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Happiness- the children feel pleasure and enjoyment because of the presence of the volunteers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Memories-- moments that are worth remembering</td>
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Table 5.1. (Continued)

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<tr>
<td>Positive relationships and connectedness</td>
<td>Reciprocal relationships- the volunteers and children do things together in a mutually relational way</td>
<td>Caring Adult Relationships- convey loving support to students by listening to students and validating their feelings, and by demonstrating kindness, compassion, and respect (Higgins, 1994; Meier, 1995).</td>
<td>Empowerment- youth feel safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive role models- the children admire the volunteers and try to be like them</td>
<td>Positive and High Expectations- adults have high expectations, can structure and guide behavior, and can also challenge students beyond what they believe they can do (Delpit, 1996).</td>
<td>Boundaries &amp; Expectations- Adult role models model positive, responsible behavior, adults have high expectations</td>
<td>Positive Identity- Youth develops self-esteem, a sense of purpose, and optimism about his/her future.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spending time together (mentors)- mentors spends a period of time with one child on a weekly basis building relationship</td>
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<td>Dependable and Consistent (mentors)- Mentors are people who can be trusted to do and provide what the mentees need and to do it consistently</td>
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<td>Classroom and school climate</td>
<td>Classroom changes- changes that have occurred in the classroom environment, social climate, emotional and physical since Just Love came to the school</td>
<td></td>
<td>Support- Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School changes- changes that have occurred in the school relative to the quality and character of school life since Just Love came to the school</td>
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<td>Support- Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment</td>
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Table 5.1. (Continued)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Experiences</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Celebrations and Activities</strong>- group activities to celebrate special times as well as other group functions that are fun for the children</td>
<td>Opportunities to participate and contribute- They treat students as responsible individuals, allowing them to participate in all aspects of the school’s functioning (Rutter et al., 1979; Rutter, 1984; Kohn, 1993).</td>
<td>Constructive Use of Time- Youth engaged in creative activities</td>
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<td><strong>Gatherings for Everyone</strong>- activities that involve the school, family and the community all at the same activity</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>New Experiences and Opportunities</strong>- Things children may not have had before or may not have without Just Love</td>
<td>Opportunities to participate and contribute- They treat students as responsible individuals, allowing them to participate in all aspects of the school’s functioning (Rutter et al., 1979; Rutter, 1984; Kohn, 1993).</td>
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<td><strong>Support and Resources</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Academic Support (whole school)</strong>- volunteers assist children in helping them to prepare for tests as well as activities to enhance their reading and math skills, and prepare them for future careers. They also provide them with new knowledge.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Commitment to Learning- Youth actively motivated and engaged in learning, completes homework, cares about his/her school, and reads for pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Support (mentors)</strong>- volunteers assist children in helping them to prepare for tests as well as activities to enhance their reading and math skills, and prepare them for future careers. They also provide them with new knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment to Learning- Youth actively motivated and engaged in learning, completes homework, cares about his/her school, and reads for pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Skills (mentors)</strong>- volunteers teach and help children improve their social skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social Competencies- Youth develops decision-making and planning, and interpersonal skills</td>
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Conclusions and Implications

Summary of Findings

The research on faith-based partnerships is scant. Hence, this study contributes significantly to the literature by providing information on the possible effects of a faith-based school-family-community partnership on students in an urban elementary school. Taken together, the findings reveal that Just Love, a faith-based school-family-community partnership contributed to improved student outcomes in reading achievement, behavior and attendance and provided important protective factors and developmental assets for the children in Charisma ES. When triangulated with findings from an evaluation study of Just Love from the perspective of the teachers and volunteers (Henry et al., 2012), the qualitative findings in this study suggest that the protective factors and developmental assets created by the Just Love partnership program support improved academic, behavior, and attendance outcomes for students in Charisma ES.

When considering the challenges that children in urban neighborhoods and schools like those at Charisma ES face, it is essential that school personnel and stakeholders provide them with programs that mitigate or buffer the negative effects of living in poverty and contribute to students’ academic, career, psychosocial well-being, despite the presence of adversity. The Just Love partnership program presents a viable model for schools and faith-based organizations who desire to foster educational resilience and positive academic, behavior, and attendance outcomes for children.

Implications for Practice

School counselors are called on to collaborate with stakeholders to help meet children’s needs (ASCA, 2010). Often school counselors are overwhelmed with large caseloads of students facing complex needs and multiple challenges such as, homelessness and poverty. School counselors can initiate faith-based partnerships like Just Love to meet the needs of large caseloads. From the school counseling perspective, the findings of this study indicate that faith-based school-family-community partnerships like Just Love can be a viable tool for increasing protective factors and developmental assets in schools.
Further, school principals and teachers should augment instructional and other strategies designed to increase academic, behavior and attendance outcomes with faith-based partnerships, especially in failing and high poverty schools. The caring adult relationships that volunteers and mentors can contribute to students’ academic outcomes mitigate or buffer the negative effects for students living in poverty. As seen in this study

Partners from both the school and faith-based organization should ensure that the partnership program they implement is multilevel and systemic like the Just Love partnership. Just Love comprised of Just Mentor, which was an individual level intervention, Just Connect, which was a classroom level intervention, and Just Rewards, which was a school wide intervention. The large number of protective factors and developmental assets that students identified in this study may have been due to the multilevel, systemic nature of the partnership programs. Further, while the classroom adoption approach contributed to improved academic achievement, the mentoring program contributed to improved attendance outcomes. While one program may not by itself be enough to influence academic, behavior, or attendance outcomes, a multilevel, systemic partnership appears to be more effective in improving multiple student outcomes.

Although many school principals and faith-based leaders engage in school-family-community partnerships (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Maluk et al., 2008), many others avoid these partnerships because they assume it would be difficult to form these partnerships due to separation of state and religion/church, differences in vision, and pushback from the public (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002). Yet, most principals who partner with faith-based organizations report no problems with volunteers from these organizations regarding proselytizing or violating rules regarding faith-sharing in their schools (Maluk et al., 2008). A large percentage of principals report that faith-based partnerships consistently produce “compassionate results” such as loving and caring relationships and numerous supports and resources that they bring to the school, students, and their families (Tripses & Scruggs; Maluk et al., 2008). Given these
benefits, principals, school counselors, and other school personnel should not be paralyzed or stay away from faith-based partnerships because of fear of proselytizing or pushback from families.

Indeed, findings of this study suggest that school and faith based leaders can effectively navigate the logistics of building these partnerships. Faith-based partnerships like Just Love foster the capacity of low-performing schools to manage school-family-community partnerships. The structure of the Just Love partnership indicates that partnerships need to have a process model that guides principals, school counselors, and partners in building an effective partnership. The Bryan and Henry (2012) Partnership Process Model, which undergirded the Just Love partnership in this study, could help schools and faith-based partners understand how to build effective partnerships. For example, the partnership process model allowed the principal, school counselor, and faith-based leaders in the Just Love partnership to prepare to partner and lay a foundation for a strong partnership. Partners from the faith-based organization worked diligently to align their vision with the school’s vision and to understand the policies of schools (e.g., the importance of not proselytizing). The partnership model also guided the school and faith-based partners to work together to identify the needs and strengths of the school and to create a shared vision plan to meet those needs. An integral aspect of the partnership process was training volunteer and mentors in the rules that guide faith-based partnerships in schools, in recognizing the strengths as well as the needs of students, and in focusing on “compassionate results.” The Just Love Partnership Leadership Team (PLT), which comprised school staff and volunteers from the faith-based organization, strengthened the partnership capacity to coordinate the partnership through a clear and designated communication system, providing partnership coordinators and liaisons for the various components of the partnership. This team approach between the school and church partners should counteract the challenges of building faith-based partnerships.

The partnership process model (Bryan & Henry, 2012) also guided the partners to respect parents’ cultures and religions and parents’ wishes concerning their children’s religious practices (e.g., not to be involved in certain activities that may conflict with their religion, such as celebrating birthdays).
It is important that volunteers and mentors understand that they will be working with children and families from all religious and cultural backgrounds and understand the need to respect their values and beliefs. This will help to ensure that no families or students are isolated or excluded from the program if they do not have the same faith as the faith-based organization and will also allow families the freedom to choose what events they want their children included in. Although there were no objections or pushback from families whose children were served by the Just Love partnership, school counselors and principals should ensure that any families that do not want their children to be included in programs implemented by the faith-based partnership have other options. This highlights the needs for schools to partner with other community stakeholders so as to provide multiple programs and opportunities for students.

Given the findings of this study about the contributions of a multilevel, systemic faith-based school-family-community partnership to academic outcomes of students in a low-performing high poverty school, a need exists for principals, school counselors, other school staff, and faith-based leaders to advocate for extending Just Love partnerships to more schools in Florida and elsewhere. Faith-based partnerships with caring and compassionate volunteers serving as mentors and adopting classrooms of teachers and students could help create many of valuable protective factors and developmental identified in this study in low-performing schools like Charisma ES. Advocates for these partnerships should highlight the fact that often these partnerships are very welcome in high poverty low-income schools and communities where support and resources are few and where children need more caring adults to buffer them from risk factors. Advocates should also highlight the importance of grounding these partnerships in a strengths-based model and in using a collaborative partnership process model (e.g., Bryan & Henry, 2012) to navigate the process of partnership-building.

**Implications for Training**

Principal, teacher, and counselor preparation programs should provide pre-service and in-service training opportunities for school counselors, teachers, and administrators in partnerships and how to build
effective partnerships with faith-based organizations. Trainings can take place in local schools and districts, in faith-based and community organizations as well as at professional conferences such as the American School Counseling Association, the American Counseling Association, the Association of Counselor Education and Supervision, and the American Evaluation Association. Graduate programs should integrate partnership coursework in professional identity or orientation to the profession courses as well as more field-based courses such as practica and internships. Professional development workshops and graduate courses should integrate information on successful partnership programs including multilevel, systemic, faith-based partnerships like Just Love. Further, participants in these workshops and courses should learn about concrete strategies for building effective partnerships including how to navigate the process of building faith-based partnerships. Models such as the partnership process model (Bryan & Henry, 2012) would be useful in helping school counselors, teachers, and administrators to learn how to navigate/address the logistics of building faith-based school-family-community partnerships. In their internships or service learning programs, school and mental health counseling students can team together to develop and implement a multilevel, systemic school-family-community partnership program in the field using a successful program like the Just Love partnership program.

School counselors can use their training to provide training to partners from faith-based organizations on how to engage with schools in appropriate ways so as to move from educational outsider to insider (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, TFT.challenge.gov.). Similarly, they can also train school staff. They should provide training on the benefits and challenges of building partnerships, how to build an effective partnership using the partnership process model (Bryan & Henry, 2012), and the guidelines concerning faith-based school-family-community partnerships. Volunteers and mentors should be taught the importance of not proselytizing. They should be taught to recognize the strengths and needs of the families and students, to challenge their assumptions about families and students, and how to work respectfully with children and parents.
Implications for Evaluation

This study helps further understanding of how school and faith-based partners can work together and the kinds of student outcomes that these partnerships can promote. Recent federal initiatives on faith-based and community partnerships have focused on boosting key outcomes such as Attendance, Behavior, Course performance, and College access (the ABCs; U.S. Department of Education, 2012, TFT.challenge.gov). Faith-based school-family-community partnerships will need to integrate measurable outcomes into their plan and goals from the outset (Bryan & Henry, 2012). An evaluation plan will make it more likely that faith-based partnership leadership teams can document the outcomes, strengths, and challenges of their partnership. Given the challenges with tracking data, faith-based partnerships should utilize a collaborative approach to evaluating a faith-based school-family-community partnership such as the one used in this study. The Model of Collaborative Evaluation (Rodriguez-Campos & Rincones-Gomez, 2012) not only provided the guiding principles for this evaluation but can be a resource for school in the evaluation of partnerships. It allowed for ongoing engagement between evaluators and stakeholders and resulted in a stronger evaluation design, enhanced data collection and analysis, and results that stakeholders could understand and use.

Implications for Policy

The Bush and Obama administrations’ policies have supported faith-based organizations’ involvement in schools and communities. Both administrations recognize the important role of faith-based and community organizations in improving schools (e.g., U.S. Department of Education Together for Tomorrow, 2012). These policies have also made federal funds accessible to faith-based organizations in order to provide much needed services and programs, especially in low income areas. However, there appears to be a constant threat that this involvement and access may be limited (Loconte & Fantuzzo, 2002; Miller & Engel, 2011). Based on this study, actions that limit support for faith-based school-family-community partnerships would mean a loss of critical protective factors and developmental assets for
schools, especially low performing schools. Given the “compassionate results” and improved academic outcomes that could be produced by a faith-based program like Just Love, it is important that federal policies maintain support for faith-based partnerships with schools. Further, as the government considers policies concerning academic achievement and the personal and social development of youth, they must be cognizant of the numerous support and resources that faith-based organizations have to offer.

**Implications for Future Research**

Despite the promising results in this evaluation study of Just Love, a faith-based school-family-community partnership in an urban elementary school, further research is needed to determine the effects of this partnership on academic-related outcomes of students. Future research on faith-based partnerships should use an experimental design utilizing a control school to control for pre-existing differences among students and confounding variables. In addition, this faith-based partnership should be replicated in middle and high schools in similar high poverty areas to determine their effects on academic outcomes with older student populations. Such studies would highlight how contextual variables impact such partnerships and provide insights concerning how the process of building faith-based partnerships differs in various contexts. The study should also be replicated in elementary schools to determine whether the faith-based partnership has similar results in other elementary schools.

Given the challenge of data management in schools, in future research on faith-based school-family-community partnerships examining student outcomes, it would be best for partners and researchers to develop a data management system to track student data longitudinally. Further, it would be important for researchers to administer their own pre-tests and post-tests to collect data on student academic outcomes as well as on protective factors, developmental assets, school climate, and similar other variables that may alleviate the risk factors of inequality and poverty for student in high-poverty schools.

Finally, studies of faith-based partnerships should be mixed design so as to paint a more complete picture of the impact of the partnership. In this study the qualitative findings indicated that the protective
factors and developmental assets being generated by the faith-based partnership likely contributed to the positive academic outcomes. Further, qualitative research using photo-elicitation should incorporate children taking their own pictures (i.e., photovoice) throughout the partnership as part of the research process.

Conclusion

Schools and faith-based organizations build partnerships to help support teachers, students, families, and communities. Faith-based partnerships can provide a rich source of support and resources for schools and families, may foster protective factors and developmental assets for children, and promote resilience and academic success for children. This study extends the literature on faith-based school-family-community partnerships providing insights about the potential influence of a faith-based partnership on students and their academic-related outcomes and increasing knowledge about faith-based partnerships with schools. Educational leaders and policy-makers may want to consider building faith-based school-family-community partnerships as strategy for helping failing schools and the children at-risk of failure in those schools to succeed. This evaluation has shown that faith-based school-family-community partnerships that are comprehensive in nature offering programs at the individual, classroom and school wide level may be effective in helping children to be successful personally, socially and academically. As the principal of Charisma ES stated:

There are so many things that are not graded that make a school successful. Even when the scores are not great, my kids are wonderful. (Principal of Charisma ES)

Through the children’s voice we hear:

I would like to continue being a part of Just Love because I need someone to talk to. I need it for support. They’re the best. (Joseph, grade 5, male mentee)

They are not just our friends they’re more like family. (Orland, grade 5, male mentee)

Faith-based school-family-community partnerships such as Just Love “cannot make children's
hurts and fears and frustrations and disappointments go away” but it is effective in “softening the blow” by providing the protective factors and developmental assets children need to overcome risk factors.

Faith-based school-family-community partnerships do not treat the symptom of poverty and risk in isolation but is part of the ecological systems that focuses on “healing the entire community” by starting in the schools.
References


   

   


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The National Center for Children in Poverty. (2013). *Young child risk calculator*. Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/tools/risk/?state=FL&age-level=9&income-level=Poor&ids%5B%5D=77&ids%5B%5D=84&ids%5B%5D=76&ids%5B%5D=78&ids%5B%5D=74&ids%5B%5D=72&submit=Calculate


Appendix A
Just Love Photo Elicitation Interview Protocol

What were students’ perceptions and experiences since the implementation of Just Love?

Hello,
I would like to create a book called

“The Story of Just Love”- Through the Voices of the Children”

And I need your help.
I would like you to choose pictures to place in this book. Therefore I will ask you some questions that will help tell the story of Just Love.

Before Photo Elicitation:
1) Tell me what you know about Just Love.
2) What do you like about Just Love?

Photo Elicitation Interview Questions:
3) Look at all of these pictures. Which picture do you think best shows what Just Love is like. Now give that picture to me. Tell me about the picture.
4) Now, of all these pictures, which picture best shows Just Love (ask same questions until all of the pictures are selected.
5) Of all of these pictures which one is most important to you? What makes this one so important to you?
6) Tell me about your mentor. Tell me what things you did with your mentor. Tell me what you like about having a mentor.

After Photo Elicitation:
7) Tell me what the Just Love volunteers do with you at school.
8) Tell me about some of the things Just Love volunteers gave you.
9) What is your favorite thing to do that is a part of Just Love?
10) What is your classroom like since Just Love came to your school?
11) What is the school like since Just Love came to your school?
12) Is there anything you did not like about Just Love?
13) If you could change anything about Just Love what would you change?
14) Would you like to continue being a part of the Just Love programs? Why?
15) Is there anything else you would like to tell me about Just Love?
Appendix B

Parent/Guardian Permission Letter for Study/Parent Informed Consent

Dear

The Study eIRB#15601
Your child is being asked to participate in a study because he/she attends Charisma Elementary School and is currently being mentored through the Just Love programs. Only twenty students will be interviewed for this study. Just Love is the partnership between Charisma Elementary School and a large suburban church. Just Love provides children with mentors, teachers with support through a classroom adoption program and parents and students with various rewards and incentives such as Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas gifts, book bags and school supplies and uniforms.

We are asking permission for children who have been mentored at Charisma Elementary School within the last four years in second grade through fifth grade to participate. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the Just Love programs in order to understand students’ satisfactions, experiences, challenges and recommendations for Just Love. This program was implemented for the children and it is important to understand how children feel about the program. Hearing their voices is significant to this study.

Jackie Yani (pseudonym) a university research assistant, will interview your child so we can learn what he/she thinks about Just Love. Jackie will be trained by myself to interview your child. I am a past school counselor of Charisma Elementary School and responsible for implementing Just Love at Charisma Elementary School. The interview will be audio taped and then transcribed without your child’s name on them. Your child will be given 12 photos representing Just Love and he/she will be asked to help in creating a book called: “The Story of Just Love”- Through the Voices of the Children”. Each child will be asked questions to help tell the story of Just Love through their own voices. We will conduct interviews only with children for whom these signed parent consent forms have been obtained. The interviews will last approximately 30 minutes. Time will be prearranged with teachers, so your child will not miss important academic instruction. We will also obtain test scores, attendance and behavior information from the school. We will give the school a report about the results for the whole group. The book “The Story of Just Love”- Through the Voices of the Children” will be donated to the school.

Benefits of the Study
Your child will not directly benefit from the study. There are no known risks for your child in participating in this study. The school overall will benefit from this study as they will learn what children think about Just Love and if it has benefited the children and the school. The information can help improve Just Love, which can eventually benefit more students like your child.

Confidentiality
We will keep your child’s information private and confidential, including the transcribed interview and the audiotape. They will be kept in a locked room. They will not be destroyed at the end of the study but your child’s name will be removed from all forms. Only the few people working on the study will be able to see an individual student’s responses. Authorized research personnel, the USF Institutional Review Board and the Dept. of Health and Human Services may view your child’s records from this study. This is done to make sure that we are doing the study in the right way. They also need to make sure that we are protecting your rights and your safety. Any report will talk about groups of students without the real names of any student or the school that students attend. The school will receive a final evaluation report and presentation without the names of students.
Voluntary
The decision for your child to join, or not to join this study, is completely voluntary. You or your child will not be paid, and his/her participation does not count for any grade at school. His/her answers will not affect his/her grades.

Instructions
Please read and sign the Parent Consent Form at the end of this letter if you choose to let your child be in the study. I really appreciate your help in allowing your child to be a part of this research study. If you have any questions, please call Lynette Henry at (813) _________. If I am not there, please leave a message and I will return your call.

Question and Contacts
The University of South Florida’s Institutional Review Board has approved this study. If you or your child has questions about your child’s rights as a person taking part in this study, you may contact a member of the Division of Research Compliance of the University of South Florida at (813) 974-5638. The approval is valid through March 4, 2015.

| Parent Informed Consent (Agreement Form) for My Child to Participate in this Research Study |
| [ ] I give permission for my child to be included in this study, Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnership. |
| If you sign this form it means that you agree to let your child participate in the study, Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnership. You are also giving permission for your child to be audio taped. You and your child are free to stop participating at any time, without question. Please sign and return one copy and keep the other copy for your records. |
| Parent Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________ |
| Parent Printed Name: ______________________________________ |
| Child’s Name: ____________________________________________ |
March 4, 2014
Lynette Henry Psychological and Social Foundations Tampa, FL 33612
RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review
IRB#: Pro00015601
Title: Just Love: A Collaborative Evaluation of a Faith-Based School-Family-Community Partnership
Dear Ms. Henry:
On 3/4/2014, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and APPROVED the above application and all documents outlined below.

Approved Item(s):
Protocol Document(s):
Lynette Henry Dissertation USF IRB PROTOCOL 2-24-2014
Study involves children and falls under 45 CFR 46.404: Research not involving more than minimal risk.
Consent/Assent Document(s)*: Lynette Henry Dissertation Parent Informed Consent, 3-3-14.pdf (Children have Verbal Assent)
*Please use only the official IRB stamped informed consent/assent document(s) found under the "Attachments" tab. Please note, these consent/assent document(s) are only valid during the approval period indicated at the top of the form(s).

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:
(5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).
(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval by an amendment.

We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,
Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice Chairperson USF Institutional Review Board
Appendix D

Verbal Assent Script

Hello my name is Mrs. Henry. I am a USF student doing research on Just Love. Do you know what I mean by Just Love?

You have a mentor through Just Love?

Well my study (eIRB#15601) is to evaluate the Just Love Programs and I would like to find out if you would like to participate but first I need to share some more information with you.

I am evaluating Just Love because we would like to know if you are satisfied with it, what kind of experiences you have had because of Just Love and any challenges you face or improvements you can suggest.

If you choose to participate, I will have another USF student come in to your school and ask you some questions. You will look at some pictures that represent Just Love and then say what you think. The questions will help tell the story of Just Love through your voice. Your interview will last about 30 minutes. At the end a book called “The Story of Just Love”- Through the Voices of the Children” will be donated to the school.

We will keep your name private and only what you share about Just Love will be used in the study. If you do share something that can hurt you or another person then we will get someone in the school who can help. You can choose to be part of the study or you can choose not to be a part of the study. It is voluntary. It will not cost you anything to participate and you will not lose anything by not participating. Your grades will not be affected by any decision you make.

Would you like to participate in the study?

Yes. Thank you.

No. Thank you.
Appendix E

Tables of Categories, Themes, Codes and Excerpts

Table E.1: Category 1: Perceptions of Just Love

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<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Described as people- what the children know as Just Love</td>
<td>1.1.1 Just Love (JL) are people who are nice, wonderful, fun and show sweetness and kindness</td>
<td>“I know that they are very nice. I also know that when since I’ve been in this school they kept on coming to school and they show activities and they do really cool stuff with us.” (Robby)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.2 The JL volunteers are happy and smiling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.3 The JL volunteers are people that come into the school to see the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.4 The JL volunteers are proud of the children</td>
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<td>1.1.5 The JL volunteers are respectful towards the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.6 The JL get good results</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.7 The JL volunteers get things ready for the children-tea party, school supplies, field trip, parties, activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.8 The JL volunteers affirm the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.9 The JL volunteers treat them like family</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1.10 The mentees describe their mentor as nice, having a smile, kind to them and their friends and treat them with respect</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Helping- the volunteers assist in ways that make things more pleasant or easier to deal with</td>
<td>1.2.1 The JL volunteers are helpful</td>
<td>“I know that Just Love is like they are helpful and they aren’t mean to you.” (Andre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2.2 The JL volunteers adopt the children to help them and to talk to them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.3 The JL volunteers help the children with classroom activities, fun activities, school work, with problems they face and other stuff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.4 The JL volunteers help the children with anything they want or need</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.5 The JL volunteers give the children support that they need</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.6 The JL volunteers help the school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2.7 The JL volunteers help the children and their family</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“They can just come and just cut their hair so it would be much easier cause the parents don’t have to pay for it.” (Joimil)</td>
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</table>
Table E.1 (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Giving- the volunteers give something that is valued or needed</td>
<td>1.3.1 The JL volunteers are giving</td>
<td>“Just Love volunteers gave me presents they gave us presents they gave us nice jewelry and they gave me a skateboard and a it’s like a drawing and it has me on it and it has the rest of my class and my teacher.” (Andre)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.2 The JL volunteers bring things for the children and buy them stuff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.3 The JL volunteers give the children Christmas and birthday presents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.4 The JL volunteers give the children gifts- coloring books, crayons, puzzles, hats scarves, hair cuts, nice jewelry, baby dolls, books to read, jacket, school uniform, jeans, hoola hoop, Frisbee, clothes, footballs, basketballs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.5 The JL volunteers give the children clothing items- school uniforms, jackets, socks, underwear and some other basic need items.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.6 The JL volunteers give the children special gifts- jewelry box, Macy’s diamond ear rings, skateboard with class picture on it, My Little Pony set, dresses for the tea party, pajamas, Barbie doll thing with glitter, lip-gloss and nail polish, Easter basket with a pink teddy bear, journal and stationery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.7 The JL volunteers give the children food items- fruit, candy, cookies, chocolate, food for parties, Thanksgiving dinner, cupcakes and pizza, McDonalds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.8 The JL volunteers give the children school supplies- book bags, pencils, stuff, binders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.3.9 The JL volunteers give the children classroom supplies- paper towels, wipes, soap, snacks, forks, plates, napkins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3.10 The JL volunteers gave them things they could do over the breaks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Loving &amp; Caring- the volunteers show the children that they matter and are valuable in a loving and caring way</td>
<td>1.4.1 The JL volunteers love the school and the school loves JL</td>
<td>“Well what I know about Just Love is that they care for us and then they provide help to the students.” (Sharai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.2 The JL volunteers bring a lot of love, care, joy in the children’s lives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.3 The JL volunteers don’t it because they have to they actually care for the children</td>
<td>“I like Just Love show their love to the boys and girls that they can buy them book bags cause some of their moms and dads can’t afford book bags or any stuff for them.” (Tiffany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4.4 The children feel that they matter and are valuable to the JL volunteers</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Table E.2. Category 2: Positive Feelings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Appreciation</td>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>The JL volunteers go through all this hard work for the children and the children get to enjoy it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the children understand and are grateful for the volunteers giving up what they consider important and valuable in order to help them</td>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>The JL volunteers did not have to use their own money but they did it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>The JL volunteers go out of their way for the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.4</td>
<td>The JL volunteers take up their time to come see the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.5</td>
<td>The JL volunteers buy things just for the children. Normally the children have to pay but they do it for free</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.6</td>
<td>The JL volunteers make up their mind to do these things for children. They want to do this for the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.7</td>
<td>The children are thankful that the JL volunteers bring them stuff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.8</td>
<td>The children appreciate the things the volunteers do for them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2.1.9</td>
<td>The children write thank you notes, letters and cards to the volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.10</td>
<td>The children are thankful for their mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Happiness</td>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>The children are happy to have the volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the children feel pleasure and enjoyment because of the presence of the volunteers</td>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>The children are happy to spend time with the volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>The JL volunteers brings happiness to the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Memories</td>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>The children connect JL with memorable times and specific time periods in their past experiences with the volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moments that are worth remembering</td>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>JL creates memories for the children for when they leave Just, when they grow up- they can remember</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Just Love is giving boys free haircuts and other barbershops you have to pay for but Just Love do it for free. (Tiffany)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Community Fair: Face painting picture) “They are nice because they are drawing faces on the kids face and like they are being nice cause the kids want different things and the kids are happy. (Andre)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I like that picture because when I was in first grade. It looks like my first grade class. But when I was in 1st grade it had said Just Love did we didn’t know but um one day we had went on a field trip I think it was when we went on a field trip and then when we came back we see pencils on our desk and book bags and stuff. And so looking at that picture is making me think about 1st grade” (Valerie)</td>
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</tbody>
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**Table E.3. Category 3: Positive Relationships And Connectedness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. <strong>Reciprocal Relationships</strong> - the volunteers and children do things together in a mutually relational way</td>
<td>3.1.1 The JL volunteers do activities together with the children - celebrate parties, All Pro Dads and Mums breakfast, play games, eat lunch, decorations, knit, paint, fun stuff, cool things</td>
<td>&quot;... like sometimes when you write notes to them they'll write a note back...we’ll be like thank you for the party then they’ll send back a note and it be like they’ll thank you.” (Andre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 The JL volunteers spend time with the children - talk about things, communicate with the children, walk with them, being there</td>
<td>3.1.3 They share their lives and their families with the children</td>
<td>3.1.4 The relationship between the JL volunteers and the children is reciprocal - they write letters, cards and notes to each other, help each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5 The JL volunteers make sure that everything is safe for the children. They protect the children and the children trust them</td>
<td>3.2. <strong>Role Models</strong> - the children admire the volunteers and try to be like them</td>
<td>3.2.1 From observing the JL volunteers the children learn that they can be kind to others, and think of others more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 JL inspired children to believe they can make a difference in their school</td>
<td>3.2.3 JL volunteers encourage the children about their future - they can overcome, think better about themselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.4 The JL volunteers give the children a positive view of their future, of when they grow up - college and career, how you could be in your life</td>
<td>3.2.5 The children learn values from observing the JL volunteers - do your best, work harder, you can do it, I am proud of you</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2.6 JL mentors give the children hope</td>
<td>3.2.6 JL mentors give the children hope</td>
<td>&quot;He’s presenting that you can do whatever you want to do, you can be whatever you want to be but hard work comes with it. Like he’s probably a professional football player and he’s explaining that hard work gives you great things in life.” (Joseph)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### THEMES

#### 3.3. Spending Time Together (Mentors)-
Mentors spend a period of time with one child on a weekly basis building relationship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>The mentees like when their mentor comes to see them.</td>
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<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>The mentees like that they can bring their friends along sometimes to hang out with their mentor</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>The mentees like meeting the JL mentor’s family, spending time with them and learning about their family</td>
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<td>3.3.4</td>
<td>The mentees like that they have pictures together to remember their mentor as they know that when they go on to middle school they may no longer have their mentor</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3.5</td>
<td>The mentees love spending time with their mentors- play games, sports, eat outside, watch a movie, go on a field trip,</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3.6</td>
<td>The mentees like that they have fun with their JL mentors and like when mentors come to their celebrations and parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.7</td>
<td>The mentor gave them gifts- toys, food, school supplies, clothes and birthday gifts</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3.8</td>
<td>The mentees like having someone they can talk to about anything because the mentor is “trustworthy” – school, home, conversation and one-on-one time</td>
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#### 3.4. Dependable and Consistent (Mentors)-
Mentors are people who can be trusted to do and provide what the mentees need and to do it consistently

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>The JL mentors are very helpful and the children know that that they will help them whenever they need help</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>The mentees know that the JL mentor will be there for them- experiencing tragedy, frustrated, interacting with other people, and using better words</td>
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<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>The mentees know that the mentors come a specific time every week and when they do not come it is not because they did not want to see them but they had something important to do and they will come back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.4</td>
<td>The mentees feel loved by the mentors and know that they are their friend</td>
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</table>

...like on Tuesdays he comes and picks me up, we talk. We talk about what’s going on in school and how he’s doing and how I’m doing." (Robby)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.1. Classroom Changes</strong> - changes that have occurred in the classroom environment, social climate, emotional and physical since Just Love came to the school</td>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>The children behave better in the classroom.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.2</td>
<td>JL volunteer’s family members come into the classroom and the children like that</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.3</td>
<td>The classroom is more fun and exciting, but learning too</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.4</td>
<td>The children get to do a lot of stuff with the volunteers and have more conversations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.5</td>
<td>The volunteers teach the kids strategies to get them ready for FCAT or SAT or any tests</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.6</td>
<td>The JL volunteers are encouraging to the children in the classroom even when they get things wrong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.1.7</td>
<td>The children describe the classroom as wonderful, awesome, cheerful, joyful and happy, brighter</td>
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<td>4.1.8</td>
<td>The teacher is nicer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.1</td>
<td>The people in the school are nicer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.2</td>
<td>The school environment has changed</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.3</td>
<td>The school grades have improved</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.4</td>
<td>The children in the school now get things like Christmas presents and parties they may not have had before</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2.5</td>
<td>JL helps the children to do better in their reading and math</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.6</td>
<td>The school is more fun, exciting, cheerful, good, kind, nice and thankful</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.7</td>
<td>JL teaches and exposes the children to information that they normally would not have</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.8</td>
<td>The school is cleaner and friendlier and the children are proud of the school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.9</td>
<td>The school is better because the volunteers bring the children things and take time to be with them</td>
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<td>THEMES</td>
<td>CODES</td>
<td>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.1. Celebrations and Activities</strong>- group activities to celebrate special times as well as other group functions that are fun for the children</td>
<td>5.1.1 The JL volunteers have holiday celebrations/parties with the children- Thanksgiving, Christmas, Halloween, Valentine’s Day parties</td>
<td>“Just Love is having Thanksgiving party for the kids so they could have fun and they could eat and so they could have a great feast before they go home to Thanksgiving with their family.” (Andre)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.1.2 The JL volunteers come for special occasions- birthday, pajama parties, Great American Teach In, Field Day, Tea Party, field trips, dances, class parties</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.1.3 The JL volunteers have a whole bunch of fun with the children</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.2. Gatherings for everyone</strong>- activities that involve the school, family and the community all at the same activity</td>
<td>5.2.1 The JL volunteers provide gatherings for everyone- face painting, haircuts for school, All Pro Dads &amp; Moms breakfast</td>
<td>“My favorite thing to do is like when they’re having a gathering at the school like for everybody they come like they have like in this picture when they have one of these or something.” (Dulcie)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.2.2 These are times to spend together with family and friends</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.2.3 These gatherings are inspiring-speaker</td>
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<td>5.2.4 These gatherings help families interact with each other</td>
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<td>5.2.5 The parents come to the gatherings and are happy and the children have fun with them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.2.6 These gatherings give the children good feelings</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.3. New Experiences and Opportunities</strong>- Things children may not have had before or may not have without Just Love</td>
<td>5.3.1 Some children do not get presents at Christmas but JL gave them this opportunity</td>
<td>“She’s really nice, and she’s the one who helped me like my salad that I ate cause I did not really enjoy it actually never tried it before and she is nice and kind to me and all of my friends.” (Monique)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.2 JL gave children the opportunity to have a person at their side to do things with- some of them never really had a chance to do that</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.3 Some children always wanted a mentor, had never had one before and JL gave them a mentor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.4 Some parents could not have afforded school supplies, such as book bags without JL</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.5 JL gave the children the opportunity to try new things that they had never tried before or - salad, new games, meet new people, go on a field trip, parties, face painting</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5.3.6 JL gave children the opportunity to have experiences they had not had before or could not afford-Thanksgiving feast, eat expensive food or pajama party</td>
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</table>
### Table E.6. Category 6: Support and Resources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>CODES</th>
<th>NARRATIVE EXAMPLES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1. <strong>Academic Support (Whole School)</strong> volunteers assist children in helping them to prepare for tests as well as activities to enhance their reading and math skills, and prepare them for future careers. They also provide them with new knowledge.</td>
<td>6.1.1 The JL volunteers celebrate tests-FCAT, SAT, any tests.</td>
<td>“They give us education like they teach us to learn like they bring us something then they tell us what is about it and all that.” (Stephen)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.1.2 The JL volunteers teach the children strategies to get them ready for FCAT or SAT or any tests.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.3 The JL volunteers help improve the children’s grades</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.4 The JL volunteers help the children with Math.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.5 The JL volunteers read with the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.6 The JL volunteers teach the children reading strategies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.7 The JL volunteers bring the children things from their travels and tell them all about it</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.8 The JL volunteers travel places and share about it with the children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.9 The JL volunteers support parents in teaching their children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6.1.10 The JL volunteers bring in speakers to share with the children about their careers</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2. <strong>Academic Support (Mentors)-</strong> Mentors assist their mentees by providing them with one-on-one support in developing their math and reading skills.</td>
<td>4.2.1 The JL mentors help their mentees with math, Fast Math, math worksheets, learning of multiplication and times tables.</td>
<td>“He’s a nice person and when like I get when I can’t really understand it he’ll help me and all the stuff I need help with he’ll show me a different way, I can get it faster than I usually do.” (Afric)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2.2 The JL mentors go to the library with their mentees, read books with them, give them strategies for reading and writing and help improve their reading level</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2.3 The JL mentors are concerned about their mentee’s education/work and will take them places to help them with their work or work in the classroom with them</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.4 The JL mentors help their mentees with homework and on the computer</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.2.5 The JL mentors have helped to improve the mentee’s grades</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3. <strong>Social Skills (Whole School)</strong> - volunteers teach and help children improve their social skills</td>
<td>6.3.1 The JL volunteers teach the children about manners</td>
<td>“Because they’re fun and they help me like interact with other people.” (Dulcie)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.3.2 The JL volunteers help the children interact with other people</td>
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<td>6.3.3 The JL volunteers teach the children strategies to calm down when they are mad</td>
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