



# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

2009-2011

## A Message from the Executive Director

Engaging a complex organization like Interface in a deep strategic planning process is a lot like “working on a boat while at sea” – very necessary, but to be done with special care so as not to disrupt the important work of service that must continue every moment of every day.

For several years, the Interface Board and executive leadership team desired to engage the community in a thoughtful and thorough planning effort. We know what Interface is today: a vibrant, complex, and far-reaching support organization helping thousands of our neighbors and community members each month. What we needed to know, however, was what Interface *can and must become* to be of greatest value to our community. To understand that question, we sought out the advice and perspective of many across our county: our volunteers, staff, Board, donors, clients, community leaders and stakeholders.

This plan represents a summary of about nine months of planning and deliberate engagement of staff and community stakeholders alike. On behalf of the Interface Board and staff, I would like to express our gratitude to all those who contributed to the ideas, perspectives, dreams, and realities of what is now a clear plan for the future development of one of Ventura’s longest standing social service organizations. Interface was started by the community, for our community, and this plan will help us to evolve and develop with our changing community. Special thanks goes to our esteemed Board colleague, Ron Smiley for his leadership and vision and to our excellent consultant, Doug Green.

### Adopted January 29, 2009 by the Interface Board of Directors:

Co-Chair Mike Sedell	City Manager of Simi Valley
Co-Chair Ron Polito	Partner, Don Carlton. Inc.
Patricia Cobleigh	President, Profitable Growth Business Development
Judy Diaz	Insurance Broker, TWIW Insurance Services
Theodore J. England	Attorney, Ferguson Case Orr Paterson Cunningham
Spencer Garrett	General Partner, Pierpont Racquet Club
Kathy Hartley	Business Owner, Lavender
Jim McCann	Consultant to IT Companies
Mark Lisagor	Pediatric Dentist
Ronald Smiley, Ph.D.	Director, Avionics, Naval Air Warfare Center Pt. Mugu
Ron F. Wagley	Ret. Chair, CEO/Pres., Transamerica Occidental Life Ins.

With eager expectation for the future of Interface Children Family Services,

Erik Sternad  
Executive Director  
Interface Children Family Services

**Strategic Plan Contents**  
Interface Children Family Services  
1305 Del Norte Rd., Camarillo, California

- I. Mission, Vision and Values
- II. Strategic Goals and Objectives: 2009-2011
- III. Planning Overview
- IV. Data Collection Activities Recap
- V. Interface Agency Description
- VI. Implementation Plan

## I. Mission, Vision and Values

### **Mission – (Our reason for existence)**

*Strengthening children, families and communities to be safe, healthy and thriving.*

### **Vision – (Our envisioned future)**

*In our community, the dream of safety, health and connectedness for every child, adult and family is realized.*

### **Values – (Our core values)**

Interface's staff, volunteers and Board of Directors are guided by the following shared core values:

- **Community.** *Interface builds partnerships that encourage teamwork and empower friends, families and neighborhoods.*
- **Excellence.** *Interface holds itself to the highest standards of efficiency, program quality and service results.*
- **Integrity.** *Interface builds credibility and trust in the community by aligning its mission, programs, people and results.*
- **Respect.** *Interface demonstrates positive attitude and professional regard among staff, volunteers and community members.*
- **Service.** *Interface serves with compassion and commitment.*

## **Operating Model/Program Approach**

Interface will develop into a fully integrated, community-driven family support organization. Our primary objective will be to respond to the expressed needs of our clients by bringing proven, client-centered, highly accessible, fully integrated services to them at the locations and times best suited to the clients who need them the most. Clients will experience services as individualized, accessible and seamless. The aim of creating and sustaining this experience will inform all logistical, staff or funding considerations.

### **Program Competencies.**

Interface's key program areas and competencies are:

- mental health services
- family violence prevention and intervention
- best-practice training and technical assistance
- 2-1-1 information and referral
- community-based youth and family strengthening programs

### **Best-practice Services.**

Each program will be constructed on best-practice models, or, in the absence of such models, on well-defined innovative service models. Interface will continually review and monitor program outcomes for improvement, training and outcome dissemination.

### **Family Resource Center Model.**

Interface will deliver integrated, individualized services and support to clients by creating or collaborating with neighborhood-based Family Resource Centers (FRCs). Based on identified community needs and by community request, Interface will locate its integrated services in Interface or non-Interface managed community-based Family Resource Center-type facilities. Each FRC will:

- be sited within walking distance of clients or on public transportation routes to facilitate easy access to services;
- be endorsed by or co-created with local community leaders and clients;
- enable an integrated child and family team of service providers (both Interface and non-Interface) that will meet the expressed client needs;
- collaborate with other service partners to provide easy access to under-served communities across Ventura County.

### **Other Specialized Services.**

Interface will deliver other specialized services (domestic violence shelters, batterers' treatment and mental health offices, training and technical assistance), as defined by best practices and community needs.

## II. Strategic Goals and Objectives: 2009-2011

### 1. Positioning

**Proving Impact.** Formal program evaluation and evidence-based program development will be balanced with a commitment to responsiveness and innovation. Interface will prove and publicize the impact and effectiveness of its programs and services. Interface will develop the Santa Paula Family Resource Center as a replicable FRC model. Additional FRC's will be developed in partnership with communities and other service providers.

**County-Wide Reach.** Interface strives to implement a service delivery model that reaches all of the communities of Ventura County. In our county, Interface will strive to be the 'go-to' place for family and community strengthening practice including: mental health care, family violence prevention and intervention, best-practice service delivery and dissemination, information and referral, and community-based youth and family strengthening programs.

Interface will participate in and strengthen the family strengthening collaborative in Ventura County.

**Market Niche.** Interface Children Family Services will focus on becoming a family and community strengthening organization with national significance. Participation and contributions to statewide and national coalitions and conferences will further family strengthening practice and best practice dissemination. Interface programs will be integrated and delivered through accessible FRC locations in communities that have demonstrated service needs.

### 2. Communication and Engaging the Community

**Branding and Marketing.** Interface will develop a strong and focused brand that is relevant, recognizable and positive. Interface will seek community and stakeholder support of its mission and programs through volunteerism, leadership and philanthropy.

Interface will consistently communicate to all stakeholders the Interface brand through an annual report, and periodic updates on significant progress towards these strategic goals.

**Collaborations and Partnerships.** Interface's future success will be determined, in part, by its ability to form and sustain partnerships with others who serve children, adults and families. Interface's extensive network of nonprofit, corporate, volunteer and philanthropic partners assures the delivery of a full range of services to consumers and communities.

**Board of Directors Development.** The Interface Board will expand membership, maintain and educate board members to optimize governance capacity and to increase its diversity and strength.

**Volunteer Management.** Interface’s strong volunteer corps will provide service to the community and assist Interface with marketing, fundraising, program evaluation, service delivery and partnership development.

### **3. Funding and Financial Management**

**Financial Development and Sustainability.** Interface will maintain a well-diversified funding mix that includes a broad and dedicated donor base. Interface will build a 90-day operating reserve and a discretionary fund to fuel innovation in response to emerging community, family and child needs.

**Financial Management and Oversight.** Interface will maintain strong financial management systems to assure financial integrity, efficiency and transparency. Information will be available in a timely, accurate and accessible format to support informed strategic and program development decisions by board and staff.

### III. Planning Overview

Interface's leadership committed to develop a strategic plan for the organization in the spring of 2008. A consultant was engaged and a Strategic Planning Group (SPG) consisting of senior staff and board members was convened. The SPG designed a planning process that included gathering opinions and ideas from a broad range of stakeholders and developing a shared vision, goals and measurable objectives.

Specifically, the Interface strategic planning process was designed to answer these questions, among others:

- Is Interface continuing to offer significant and unique value to its Ventura County constituents?
- Are Interface's stated mission, vision and values still adequate, accurate, and relevant?
- What shared vision and goals do Interface leaders hold?
- What are barriers to the ongoing success of Interface?
- Are there opportunities for Interface to increase its impact on the community through program development, innovation or collaboration with other organizations?
- What are the strategic priorities for Interface?
- What objectives and short-term action steps need to be implemented to pursue the vision and goals Interface has established?
- How will Interface maintain momentum and accountability once the plan is in place?

The SPG developed a process for collecting and analyzing information from a broad cross section of stakeholders, including board members, staff, donors, volunteers and consumers. This data yielded four distinct areas of focus for the planning process: 1) positioning; 2) branding/marketing; 3) community engagement; and 4) funding and financial management.

The SPG engaged Interface staff in affirming Interface values and identifying priorities for organizational development through two focus groups at an all-staff planning retreat and one meeting with Interface program directors. Other stakeholders were engaged through surveys, interviews and small stakeholder focus groups facilitated by the planning consultant.

The planning group acknowledges the important contributions of all who left their unique "fingerprints" on this plan: board members, staff, volunteers, donors and members of the communities Interface serves.

## IV. Data Collection Activities Recap

Planning activities began with a series of data collection activities to engage key organization stakeholders. These activities are summarized below.

**Planning Survey.** A planning survey was posted online to collect information from board members and senior staff regarding Interface's current strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats and priority issues. Priority concerns identified through this survey included 1) Fund development; 2) Program development; 3) Marketing/branding; 4) Financial development/sustainability; 5) Board development; 6) Partnership development; and 7) Program evaluation.

**Staff Survey.** An organizational assessment survey was posted online to solicit staff feedback regarding job satisfaction, management systems, marketing and community engagement. Key recommendations of staff centered on 1) Name recognition; 2) Unity; 3) Secure funding; 4) Growth; 5) Staff support; 6) Competitive compensation; 7) Honoring diversity; 8) County-wide reach; and 9) Effective outreach.

**Board Self-Assessment Survey.** A board self-assessment survey was posted online to collect information about the board's perceptions of its performance. Key concerns identified through the process included: 1) Marketing/branding; 2) Board development; 3) Planning; 4) Financial oversight; and 5) Funding/revenue streams.

**Donor Focus Group.** The planning consultant held a focus group with ten Interface donors at the Ventura County Community Foundation to solicit feedback about Interface's current situation and future direction. The donors who attended this session identified important areas of concern that included 1) Avoiding duplication of services; 2) Clarifying what Interface does; 3) Developing collaborations and partnerships; 4) Marketing/building awareness; and 5) Mending of fences broken over the past few years.

**Volunteer Focus Group.** A focus group with three Interface volunteers garnered the following priority concerns about Interface's volunteer program: 1) Developing and maintaining a strong training program; 2) Partnering with schools and churches; 3) Evaluation of program impact; and 4) Expanding the CASA program.

**Consumer Focus Groups.** Two focus groups with a total of nine Interface consumers resulted in the following feedback: 1) Continue providing a safe and secure space for women; 2) Maintain program consistency; 3) Address the concerns of returning vets; 4) Clarify the Interface brand; 5) Increase outreach to youth; and 6) Continue to provide a forum for youth to be heard.

**Community Leader Interviews.** Key findings from interviews conducted with each of nine community leaders included: 1) The importance of branding/visibility; 2) Program development; 3) De-centralization of service delivery; and 4) Partnership development.

## V. Interface Agency Description

Interface Children Family Services is an independent nonprofit agency dedicated to advancing the well-being of children, adults and families by providing an array of social services to strengthen family life and by promoting community commitment to the needs of Ventura residents.

Since 1973 Interface Children Family Services has created a nurturing environment for battered women and their children, provided mental health care, helped youth in crisis, and provided information & referrals on the phone. Today, Interface's programs include:

### *2-1-1 Social Service Information and Referral*

**2-1-1 Information and Referral.** 24/7 live, telephone information, referral and disaster response information to Ventura County residents (and other selected California county residents). The Interface Blue Book and a web-based, searchable database provide the most up to date, comprehensive single source for a wide array of public and private local services and supports.

### *Youth and Family Strengthening Services*

**Santa Paula Family Resource Center.** Services focus on the unique children, youth and family issues in the Santa Paula community. Clients have access to information and referrals, mental health and substance abuse counseling, support and parenting groups.

**Parenting Education.** Classes for parents, soon-to-be parents, teenage mothers, young fathers and families where there is a risk of child abuse and/or neglect or for those who want to strengthen their parenting skills. Classes are provided throughout the county at a variety of times and in English and Spanish.

**Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).** Providing mentoring and support to children who have been abused or neglected. Volunteers intervene and advocate on behalf of the "child's best interest" throughout court proceedings and out-of-home placements.

**Mediation and Conflict Resolution.** The Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) provides mediation and restitution, counseling and guidance to youthful offenders. When young men and women personally interact with their victims and make tangible restitution, they better understand the consequences of their actions and are less likely to continue the pattern of destructive behavior.

**\*\*Oxnard Family Strengthening.** Intensive family support is provided for families with children enrolled in five Oxnard Neighborhoods for Learning pre-school sites in the Colonia area of downtown Oxnard. Families are encouraged to drop in for referrals and support with basic needs, employment, family violence support and parenting assistance. Peer to peer support is organized and encouraged.

**Pathways.** In coordination with Ventura County Children Family Services, our Family Advocates respond to families of vulnerable children before abuse or neglect happens. We engage families in solving practical problems of daily living and parenting.

**Oxnard Youth Services Bureau.** Interface leads a unique delinquency prevention program in partnership with Ventura County Probation to benefit Latino youth in the greater Oxnard area.

### ***Family Violence Intervention***

**\*\*Teen Dating Violence Prevention.** Providing training in developing safe and healthy teen relationships to middle school students, high school students, and community youth program participants.

**My Body Belongs To Me/Taking Care of Little Me.** Classroom training and interactive skill-building sessions for pre-school and elementary school children and their parents focusing on child safety and sexual abuse prevention.

**Batterer's Intervention Program.** A 52-session program to help individuals change their violent behavior patterns. The program provides the knowledge and tools to make new choices.

**Safe Haven.** A safe, nurturing emergency residential shelter for women and their children escaping a violent living situation; including 24-hour emergency response, restraining orders, court advocacy, case management, intensive counseling and support, children's support groups, and assistance enrolling children in local schools.

**\*\*Safe Journey.** Providing semi-supervised and supported transitional housing for domestic violence victims and their children seeking a new start independent of their abusive past. Case management, job readiness, financial planning support, individual and parent/child therapy, and community support group offered.

### ***Mental Health Services***

**Therapists provide** comprehensive, client-centered, strength-based and goal-oriented counseling services.

**Therapeutic services** are provided at community sites in Thousand Oaks, Camarillo, Oxnard and Santa Paula; at Neighborhoods for Learning sites, family resource centers, schools and client homes.

**Low-cost services** are provided by Masters Level Trainees supervised by seasoned state approved Licensed Clinical Supervisors. Supervisors provide one hour of individual supervision and two hours of group supervision per week, in addition to phone consultation as needed.

**Child Abuse Treatment Services.** Intensive psychotherapy to the child victim including individual, family, group therapy; assistance in providing information and application for Crime

Victim Compensation Services; and assistance in Understanding and Participation in the Criminal Justice System.

**Therapeutic services** provided to a child victim of crime and the non-offending family members are provided at no cost to the client.

**Family Systems, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Narrative, PCIT** and various expressive therapies, such as **Art Therapy or Play Therapy**, are utilized within individual, family and group modalities.

**Specialty services**, approved by Ventura County Courts, Juvenile and Adult Probation are provided by trained licensed therapists and facilitators to offenders of sexual abuse, domestic violence and child abuse.

**Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)**, a best-practice evidence-based intervention is offered at two sites - Thousand Oaks and Camarillo. Foster, adoptive and biological parents learn to enhance their attachment to their children, their children's compliance to rules and non-violent parenting techniques in this 22-week intervention program. PCIT is especially helpful when healing child trauma.

**Our therapists include** Licensed Clinical Supervisors, Licensed Therapists, Marriage Family Child Interns, Social Work Associates and Masters Level Trainees who have developed expertise in working with families affected by domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, victims of crime and trauma, as well as children having difficulties succeeding in school or peer settings.

### ***Best Practice Training and Technical Assistance***

**Strategies**, a statewide training and technical assistance program, provides practical and highly interactive training, as well as organizational needs assessments and individualized technical assistance to professionals in the field of family support across California. Strategies' capacity building activities focus on using a strengths-based perspective, promoting evidence-based practice, sustainability planning and developing effective public-private partnerships.

\*\* These programs are at risk of closure in the FY 2009/2010 due to anticipated local and statewide funding reductions.

## **VI. Implementation Plan**

This Strategic Plan is envisioned as a three-year plan. Interface staff will be implementing objectives detailed in our Strategic Implementation Plan. This plan is considered both a starting point and a work in progress. It includes 51 objectives will be assessed continually by the agency's board and senior staff for implementation over the next three years. The Implementation Plan is designed to be an adaptive and "user-friendly" tool for articulating short term tactics and measuring incremental progress against the Plan. Adjustments to the Implementation Plan are an expected and normal part of the ongoing strategic management of Interface.

Interface's Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document and to align the agency's efforts over the next three years. It is conceived as a guide for staff activities, providing a tool to vet new ideas and address new challenges or opportunities. It will be used to guide the development of agendas for meetings, including board meetings, committee meetings and staff meetings.

Data collection, reassessment and ongoing reporting on progress are a part of the work of the individuals and committees assigned to elements of the Implementation Plan. If significant changes to the Plan are required during the next three years, a strategic planning group, comprised of board and senior staff members, may convene to consider mid-course adjustments.