

April 8, 2008

COVENTRY SCHOOL STUDY COMMITTEE

MODEL OF ADAPTIVE REUSE OF A SCHOOL

Shaker Family Center

at the former Sussex Elementary School, Shaker Heights

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The school was closed in 1987 and rented to early childhood providers until 1989-90 when the school board convened a task force for a community needs assessment which confirmed the need for early childhood education. The school owned the building, leased it to the city, which subleased it to tenants who were a mix of public and private nonprofit and government organizations. There were 4 levels of leasing.

From 1992-2005 the Shaker Family Center was responsible for maintenance and oversight, and the city paid them a subsidy but it did not cover expenses.

In 1996 the school board sold the property to the city, creating 3 levels of leasing, and one of the tenants, Cuyahoga County Board of Mental Retardation, was eligible for large capital construction grants that helped renovation.

In 2005 they reorganized and today the city maintains the building and property and provides a custodian, with the SFC responsible for day to day operations. The three tenants (Carroll Nursery, Board of Mental Retardation, and Shaker Family Center) pay a base rate and utilities.

Today the nonprofit Shaker Family Center is responsible for operations and has a Director of Operations for the building who handles the office, bookkeeping, scheduling shared facilities, and complaints and needs of the tenants.

There is a need for a Director of Programming who could help the tenants work together. They raised \$250,000 for a common children's garden.