

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

Notes from the Meeting, Thursday, August 8

This open meeting featured Susan Savell speaking about Communities for Children. About 40 community members attended the meeting. Of those who attended, about 30 individuals completed an informal post-registration form, and after hearing Susan's remarks, nearly all of those indicated they would support a Communities for Children initiative on MDI.

The two-hour agenda included:

- Susan Savell's remarks
- Questions and answers
- Discussion

In closing, the meeting organizers agreed to add attendees' contact information to the MDI TOMORROW e-mail list, and to send minutes out via this list. A follow-up meeting will be set and announced to convene those interested in forming a local Communities For Children "kitchen cabinet"/ steering group.

Susan Savell's Remarks

Communities for Children

An Initiative of the Governor's Children's Cabinet, 1197-2002

Communities for Children Goals

- To measurably improve the well-being of children in every Maine community
- To increase educational attainment and achievement levels of all Maine children

Communities for Children Process

- Stage One: Create a Children's Leadership Council
 - Pull together key leaders*
 - Create a vision
 - Do the assessments
 - Develop action plans
 - Track indicators and results
- *Could be a sub-committee of an already existing coalition or organization like the Healthy Maine Partnership.
- Stage Two: Assess the Realities
 - Analyze risk and protective factor data (Communities That Care model)
 - Use the Search Institute Survey: assess the 40 Development Assets of youth
 - Conduct local focus groups or community-wide conversations

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

- Pull together existing health assessments
- Stage Three: Implement Action Plans
 - Respond to the data
 - Utilize best practices:
 - Early care and education strategies
 - 40 Development Asset campaigns
 - America's Promise: five fundamental resources
 - ✓ Relationship with a caring adult (mentoring)
 - ✓ Healthy start
 - ✓ Safe places and structured activities
 - ✓ Marketable skills
 - ✓ Opportunities for youth to serve
 - Science-based substance abuse and youth violence prevention programs (including environmental strategies)
 - Utilize the resources of all five Children's Cabinet agencies and the national/federal connections
- Stage Four: Track Results
 - Using Program Logic model
 - Working with Maine Marks

Communities for Children

- 69 Partner Communities, representing 230 municipalities and over 70% of the state's population
- 21 "Communities of Promise" registered with America's Promise
- Many C4C connected in local collaborations with Healthy Maine Partnerships, Healthy Communities Coalitions, Underage Drinking Task Forces, etc.

Communities for Children Portland Asset Builders

- Administered the Search Institute Survey to over 3,000 students in Portland Public Schools, including Maine Youth Center residents and homeless youth
- Report results to City Council, School Board, Chamber of Commerce, Portland Press Herald, CBS/WGME TV
- Conducted 32 Community Conversations for three sessions each, reaching over 350 youth and adults entitled "Portland Kids Today: How are we Doing?"
- Succeeds in School: [This was a graph in Susan's presentation; an approximation of the data are listed below.]
 - < 10% of youth with 0-10 assets
 - < 20% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 33 % of youth with 21-30 assets

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

- 50+ % of youth with 31-40 assets
- Values Diversity
 - < 40% of youth with 0-10 assets
 - ~ 60% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 80 % of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 90 % of youth with 31-40 assets
- Maintains Health
 - ~ 33% of youth with 0-10 assets
 - ~ 50% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 75 % of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 90 % of youth with 31-40 assets
- Delays Gratification
 - ~ 25% of youth with 0-10 assets
 - ~ 40% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 52 % of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 65 % of youth with 31-40 assets
- Problem Alcohol Use
 - < 5% of youth with 31-40 assets
 - ~ 11% of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 30 % of youth with 11-20 assets
 - > 50% of youth with 0-10 assets
- Illicit Drug Use
 - ~ 0% of youth with 31-40 assets
 - < 10% of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 28% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 50% of youth with 0-10 assets
- Sexual Intercourse
 - ~ 2% of youth with 31-40 assets
 - ~ 11% of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 22% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - 30+ % of youth with 0-10 assets
- Violence
 - ~ 5% of youth with 31-40 assets
 - ~ 15% of youth with 21-30 assets
 - ~ 32% of youth with 11-20 assets
 - ~ 60% of youth with 0-10 assets

Activities of Portland Asset Builders Project

- Elected Youth Advisory Council to Portland City Council – resulting in focus on homeless youth

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

- Teen Job Bank
- Asset Speakers Bureau
- Asset Awareness Media Campaign
- “The Builder” newsletter to neighborhoods

Other Examples

- Waterville: Colby Cares About Kids Mentoring Program leads to focus on serving 565 kids in poorest neighborhood with all 5 Promises and 40 Assets
- Rangeley: Asset survey leads to creation of the outer Limits Teen Center (with a focus on tobacco prevention)
- Old Orchard and Oxford: Substance abuse data leads to Safe Homes Project for parents of middle school youth
- Ellsworth: Asset survey leads to youth support of Ellsworth Area Community Center

Results from 47 C4Cs

- 500 community organizations actively collaborating to address the needs of children
- A total of \$1,982,800 was obtained through grants and fundraising activities by 17 C4Cs
- 24 C4Cs report that youth now serve on their governing boards
- 137 new programs were created to prevent substance abuse and youth violence
- 8 new teen/community centers were created as safe places with structured activities after school
- 12 new mentoring programs were launched
- C4C Americorps*VISTA members generated a total of \$588,000 in grants and donations and \$194,000 in in-kind support
- Outcomes for youth include:
 - 235 children received a Healthy Start
 - 1,485 youth were provided with Safe Places
 - 1,050 youth were provided with a Caring Adult
 - 695 youth were given a Marketable Skill
 - 780 youth receive Opportunities of engage in community Service
 - 620 youth were provided with all Five Promises

Benefits of Joining the Initiative

- Participation in a statewide network of communities committed to positive child and youth development:

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

- List serve
- Information about grant opportunities
- Annual cluster conversations
- Access to resources:
 - The C4C Americorps*VISTA Project
 - Annual Prevention Training Institutes
 - Program templates from the experience of other Communities for Children

Question & Answer/Discussion

Q: Driving and auto accidents are an issue on MDI. Are they reflected in the correlations with 40 Developmental Assets?

A: Bureau of Health statistics include injury, suicide, and accidents. These would be in the “maintains health” section.

Q: Will the governor’s initiative and the Children’s Cabinet continue to be a priority in the new administration?

A: The community momentum is too strong to stop. Also, there is statutory authority for the Children’s Cabinet.

Q: What adaptations did Ellsworth make in their survey? Are these particular differences between urban and rural areas? How were the surveys administered?

A: Results from urban and rural communities tend to be quite parallel. We should get the specific changes Ellsworth wanted directly from them. The surveys are typically administered as a written survey in a classroom setting.

Q: The Healthy Start program includes teen parents.

A:

Q: Our program will span four communities. Who are the power players?

A: People with a passion for these issues; people with the capacity to get things done. List out the sectors: city council member or selectmen, law enforcement, school administration and educators, business leaders, youth, parents, etc. Recruit planners & doers.

Q: [To the attendees] What do you think about what you’re hearing today?

A: Tremendous value of the survey and published results to focus action.

A: Consider conducting surveys in schools vs. other places where kids congregate.

A: Use results to congratulate, too

Q: Does C4C lobby or use data to influence the legislature?

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

A: Not so much, especially since it's part of a state agency – the Children's Cabinet. Anyway, there tends to be more of a programmatic focus at the state level. Communities, however, can and do lobby.

Q: Multiple generations in attendance tonight represent past success without C4Cs. Is this necessary?

A: We can always do more. In the past, some were left behind who might not have come tonight. Also, today sex, drugs and rock & roll are lethal. Young people today may require new skills and face new challenges. This could be an area for inter-generational conversation: how different and how connected are kids' experiences today to those of their elders? This could also be an opportunity: positives don't always get heard.

Q: Is there an age breakdown available in the data?

A: Yes, and one can see indicators losing ground from 6th to 12th grade. There are also gender differences.

Q: A program, "Turn Off TV," was successfully stages in another community in collaboration with competitive challenge events between community service providers.

A: Good idea. And think too about universal activities to draw in kids who might not already be involved in community programs.

Q: Kids doing risky behaviors are the ones who wouldn't be involved in the usual programs.

A: Get everyone in the community, in neighborhoods to engage with kids in new ways. Adults sometimes avoid or are afraid of teens. Also, just having a teen center is not enough – it's what goes on there that counts – need the presence of positive adult role models. Adventure activities draw more kids. But also need activities to attract intuitive, introspective types, loners, non-sports. Find out what kids are good at (mentors) and make the feel respected. The Game Loft in Belfast . . .

Q: Because we're a rural community and transportation is an issue, we need more after school activities.

A:

Q: Then, too, kids are more and more away from home and never see their parents. Parents are working too much. Kids may be too active as a means of daycare. Maybe kids need more downtime.

A: 70% family support; 30% family communication. Launch a communication with parents about how to be more supportive and how to create more supports at home. Design support programs to make a difference at a young age. Design programs to reach all ages: home visiting for new families; Parents are

MDI Tomorrow – Subcommittee on Youth

Teachers, Too; _____; mentoring. In the neighborhood, think, “Where are the kids?” Go there and meet kids, have a block party, make connections.

Q: What is the cost of administering the survey?

A: \$2/survey, plus \$700 for scoring and report preparation. Other communities have received grants from the Maine Community Foundation

A: Peggy Wood is joining Healthy Acadia as a Vista volunteer. She can be an additional resource.

A: Published survey results are a tremendous opportunity to create awareness.

A: And to reach isolated families.

Q: Could the Search Institute survey be modified to include questions of our own design?

A: Not easily, but we could add an additional sheet of questions of our own.

Q: Studies are easier to come by than one-to-one involvement.

A: It’s important to get youth involved early in the process, especially some who aren’t involved already. Get all the cliques represented. Tap into existing groups, formal (Rotary Interact Group) and informal.

Q: Key need is transportation.

A:

Q: Articulate and communicate socio-cultural changes.

A: