



Erie Together Activity Update **February 9, 2016**

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Erie Together began the new year by reviewing each countywide action team's "impact plan". These plans outline specific objectives, strategies, action steps, and outcomes which guide the work of the Erie Together movement.

Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success

- Mercyhurst University students will help Erie Together volunteers pack this year's first 500 Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits this month. Supplies have been purchased with funding from The Kern Family Foundation. The tool kits will be distributed across the county at early education and Kindergarten registration events.
- The Kindergarten Resource Distribution task team is working on a plan to distribute materials in 2016. Erie Together has set a goal of distributing 1,000 Tool Kits; 10,000 Kindergarten Readiness Checklists; and 2,000 Progress Charts each year.
- A new task team has been established to evaluate measurements currently being used to determine outcomes. More information to come.
- The Kindergarten Registration flyer is being revised for the upcoming school year. The 2016 flyer will be ready for distribution by the end of the month thanks to donations from Little Caesar's and McCarty Printing. The flyer can be found at www.erietogether.org/k-registration.
- 2016 Summer Block-by-Block planning is underway. These events raise awareness of the importance of early childhood education and third grade reading proficiency. Erie Together is seeking additional partners to help reach more families.
- Task teams to support (1) fundraising for Erie's Future Fund (scholarship program for families to send children to quality early education programs; (2) literacy supports; and (3) transitions from pre-k to kindergarten will be reconvened to advance progress.

Action Team 2: Aligning Education to Careers

- The More Caps and Gowns Project at Girard Middle School is producing positive results. Middle school students have enjoyed interacting with additional caring adults on a regular basis, and the mentoring relationships have proven quite valuable. Mercyhurst University is interested in replicating this model at another local middle school.

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- Planning for the annual 8th grade career awareness, exploration and preparation survey is underway. This survey is administered by Career Street (www.careerstreeterie.org) through public and diocesan schools in Erie County. Revisions are being considered for 2016, along with expanding to other private institutions and homeschool students.
- A *Community and Parent Engagement* training is planned for early spring. This series of free professional development trainings is part of a partnership between Erie Together, United Way of Erie County, Unified Erie, and the Nonprofit Partnership.

Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability

- A mentor training is being held on February 18 at GECAC for individuals wishing to volunteer as part of the Family Action Team (FACTs) process. Two sessions are available: 1:00 – 4:00 PM or 4:30 – 7:30 PM. For more information, please contact Kathy Stearns at kstearns@gecac.org.
- Erie Together task teams developed a social media plan to promote the Gannon Human Services Directory (hsd.gannon.edu). Specific messaging has been created for each month and will be shared through Erie Together's network on the 3rd of each month. Help spread the word by liking, retweeting, and sharing the messages. www.facebook.com/ErieTogether <https://twitter.com/ErieTogether>

Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) Planning Group continues to meet periodically to finalize a strategy for "transitioning clients" returning to the Erie community from federal, state and local correctional institutions. This group is working closely with the other legs of the Unified Erie violence reduction approach – prevention and enforcement – to create a safer community.
- A task team is in place to develop a distribution strategy for the Work Readiness Checklist. Erie Together has a goal to distribute 5,000 checklists each year.
- Task teams have also been created to (1) measure employer and employee satisfaction with workforce development supports and (2) help overcome diversity barriers to employment. Their work continues.

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Miscellaneous:

- Erie's Public Schools is hosting FAFSA Week February 8-12. A number of sessions are available for students and families to ask questions and complete the FAFSA form. More information can be found at www.eriesd.org/fafsa.
- Erie Together has created a LinkedIn group to keep everyone informed. Visit <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/Erie-Together-8471363/about> to join the group.
- Erie Free Taxes helps eligible low and moderate income wage-earners claim the Earned Income Tax Credit by providing free tax preparation services. For more information visit <http://www.unitedwayerie.org/ErieFreeTaxes>.

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