



Erie Together Activity Update **January 2014**

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The following bullets highlight Erie Together's significant activity over the last month:

Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success

Kindergarten Readiness Parental Training Kit

- Kit design is complete; now we must order the kit bags and contents: magnetic letters, books, crayons, etc.
- Prior to mass production, we will review the kit with Highmark who has sponsored the first 150.
- St. Ben's and others will pilot kits in the near future.
- Task Team is developing a distribution strategy and plan for data collection.
- Task Team is exploring opportunities to translate kits into Spanish and potentially other languages.

Kindergarten Readiness Progress Chart

- Chart will be a fun way for children and families to measure progress toward Kindergarten readiness. Will be closely tied to skills noted in Kindergarten Readiness Checklist and the related parental training kits.
- Group reviewed samples, further solidified conceptual design.
- Task Team will present chart for review at next Action Team meeting.

Transitioning into Kindergarten

- A handful of school districts have not yet completed the survey; efforts are underway to collect their information.

Other Related Activity

- Kindergarten registration flyer is being updated for 2014, and this year will include registration deadline. Goal: increase on-time Kindergarten registrations. (Baseline data has been collected from Erie County public schools.) Once printed, fliers will be distributed into the community.
- Southern Erie County Kindergarten Roundtable continues to meet; January's meeting hosted by Union City Kindergarten teachers.

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Action Team 2: Aligning Education to Careers

Strengthening transitions from high school to post-secondary education/training

- Survey deployed; 30 organizations responded.
- Data being displayed in “usable” format so we can learn from it.
- Additional volunteers offered to serve on task team to help analyze, draw conclusions, consider next steps to help ease transitions for students/families needing help.

Utilizing After School Programs to Support Local Youth

- Task team met once; inviting additional key people to serve.
- Reviewing research re: importance and effectiveness of after school programs
- Identifying what exists locally; gaps?
- Will seek to develop strategy to get more kids connected to good programs.
- Will explore whether or not there are funding gaps and how to potentially address.

Career Street

- Director candidate interview process nearly complete.
- Successful candidate should be on board in February
- Website being tested and tweaked (www.careerstreeterie.org)

Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability

“FACT Pack” (Collateral material to support Family Action Team (FACT) expansion)

- Very good overview Pamphlet designed. Includes background, description of the model, roles and responsibilities of sponsoring agencies, and testimonials. Will be key piece in expansion efforts.
- Contact card, family recruitment poster also designed.
- Other documents necessary to support expansion nearly finished.

Erie City Mission/Emmaus Ministries FACT program

- 17 participants; class just graduated
- Erie City Mission and Emmaus Ministries developed a partnership with Edinboro University, which is allowing individuals who graduate from their FACT program to attend classes on math, literacy and soft skills at no charge to them.
- Erie City Mission and Emmaus Ministries also developed a relationship with Scott Enterprises, helping FACT graduates get considered for Scott Enterprises positions.
- HERO (Bev Fetzner) has also worked with Erie City Mission and Emmaus Ministries to provide training to participants.
- Opportunities to use this model to engage additional employers should be explored.
- Erie City Mission and Emmaus Ministries will begin running their second group soon.

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FACT Expansion Opportunities

- Mercy Center for Women facilitators have been trained; will be running a group soon.
- McLane Church
- Corry (through the efforts of the Union City Family Support Center staff, Corry Hi-Ed Council, and a pastor in Corry)
- International Institute
- Catholic parish(es) in Erie County, starting with St. Jude Parish. Facilitators have been identified; process is moving forward.

Self-Sufficiency Matrix

- Designed for use by Erie County agencies to measure client progress in self-sufficiency "domains" and help align resources to assist clients across agencies.
- Seven "domains" finalized
- Developing instructions for use
- Identifying organizations to pilot
- Sorting through data collection, reporting & "warehousing" issues

Human Services Directory

- Gannon University has taken the lead to develop this resource for the community.
- To date there are over 300 organizations included.
- After Gannon students finish proofing the entries, organizations will have another chance to check their information and make changes before it is made public.
- Some paper copies will be printed at a cost to the purchasers, but the online database will be free to all to access.
- Any organizations who want to ensure that they are included should contact Erika Ramalho (ramalho001@gannon.edu) at Gannon University as soon as possible.

Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development

Ex-Offender Reentry Strategy

- Work continues to progress.
- Common themes from sessions include: (1) need to begin "intervening" at pre-entry stage, before ex-offenders enter into the community; and (2) our community needs a "one stop shop" that will help ex-offenders easily connect to the supports they need.
- Successful "models" that reflect those themes exist in Pennsylvania. Erie may be able to learn from and implement similar efforts here, addressing the specific ideas coming from the Reentry Task Team.

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Connecting Low Income Workers to Local Jobs

- Goal: encourage and help local employers to proactively recruit low-income workers to fill local jobs (big contracted construction projects and/or within companies)
- Need: local agencies to provide support infrastructure to help address potential employee barriers AND to connect local employers with viable employees.
- Need: Communications strategy to effectively reach agencies, employers, potential workers.
- Need: Strategy to make this all work (currently under exploration.)

Other important points of interest:

- Erie Together received the "Youth Impact Award" from the Bayfront NATO Martin Luther King Center at the 4th Annual Dr. King Awards Dinner on January 18.
- Erie Together has launched a new, more vibrant and user-friendly website: www.erietogether.org
- Erie Together, along with other community partners, is hosting a "Common Core: College and Career Readiness Standards" informational forum on Thursday, January 30.
- Erie Together's Community Engagement Committee recently began its work, and is preparing to respond to requests for presentations, as well as proactively seek opportunities to inform and engage others in Erie Together's work.

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