



## **Erie Together Activity Update** **June 2016**

Prepared by:  
Mary C. Bula, Facilitator  
Nicole Wethli, Assistant Facilitator

The activity described in this report is aligned with Erie Together's priorities and desired outcomes as reflected on our "impact plans". These impact plans are the documents that guide all of Erie Together's work, and provide context for understanding the overall movement. Each of the four Erie Together Action Teams has a specific impact plan which can be found at [www.erietogether.org/impact-plans](http://www.erietogether.org/impact-plans).

### **Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success**

- The Early Childhood Awareness task team is planning Block by Block Early Learning Awareness events in six locations throughout the county. Locations include: Union City Public Library (6/22), Erie Zoo (7/10), St. Ben's Education Center (7/13), SSJNN Farmer's Market (7/18), Our Lady of the Lake – Edinboro (7/30), and The Experience Children's Museum (8/19). The purpose of these events is to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education and success and third grade reading proficiency. Funding is being provided by ECGRA and the team is working to compile resources for distribution.
- A task team is in place to evaluate current measurements in relation to impact plan goals. The team is looking into existing data measures and considering any necessary revisions.
- A small task team was formed to look into existing resources to support success in grades 1-3. The objective is to help families access additional tools to support their children's progression in those primary grade years. This will help our community's work toward this desired outcome: 73% of Erie County children will be reading at or above proficient by the end of third grade by 2019-2020.
- Erie Together is nearly halfway to reaching its goal to distribute 1,000 Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits to families in Erie County in 2016. If your organization is interested in engaging families with this resource, contact Nicole Wethli ([nicole@erietogether.org](mailto:nicole@erietogether.org)) for more information.
- McDowell High School Exposure club's annual "Love Heals" benefit show raised more than \$1,200 to support Erie Together's Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits. The event was held on May 26, 2016 at the McDowell Intermediate High School Little Theater. General McLane School District also provided an act for the show, as they are considering launching an "Exposure-like" club at their high school.

*"Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity  
where everyone can learn, work and thrive."*

**www.ErieTogether.org**



## **Action Team 2: Aligning Education to Careers**

- Career Street deployed the newly-revised annual eighth grade career awareness, exploration and preparation survey across Erie County. Data will be analyzed once it comes in. Erie Together's goal is that 80% of local students will have three or more career exploration experiences by the end of their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.
- A new "Educator in the Workplace" initiative will be launching this summer through Career Street to better connect educators with businesses. Educators will have the opportunity to earn continuing education credits by spending a week on-site to learn about a specific business/industry. For more information contact Jennifer Pontzer, Career Street's executive director at [jpontzer@careerstreeterie.org](mailto:jpontzer@careerstreeterie.org).
- A task team is planning a "Youth Civic Engagement" event for September 16, 2016. Local high schools have been invited to bring students to the event to learn about the three branches (executive, legislative and judicial) and three levels (federal, state and local) of government, and to hear from officials at three downtown governmental buildings.
- A new College and Career Pathways task team has been launched to envision college and career pathways within local schools. The group recently conducted an asset inventory to find out what is currently taking place in this regard within the school districts. As its work progresses, the team will receive technical assistance through the National Center for College and Career Transitions ([www.nc3t.com](http://www.nc3t.com)).
- In 2015 and 2016, Erie Together partnered with United Way of Erie County, Unified Erie, and The Nonprofit Partnership to offer free professional development trainings to staff at youth serving organizations. The trainings were offered quarterly and covered a variety of topics to help build capacity within these organizations. This effort was the "brainchild" of Erie Together's "extended time programs" task team, which recently met to discuss next steps as the training series is essentially complete. The goal of this group is to find meaningful ways to connect more local youth with high quality extended time programs. More information to come.
- The More Caps and Gowns Project to connect caring adults to local youth is growing. The mentoring pilot at Girard School District's Rice Avenue Middle School is producing positive results, and now Mercyhurst University is developing a similar program in partnership with Joanna Connell School of Erie's Public Schools which is set to launch in September 2016. An additional location within Erie's Public Schools is also in the very early planning stages.

*"Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity  
where everyone can learn, work and thrive."*

**[www.ErieTogether.org](http://www.ErieTogether.org)**



### **Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability**

- The Family Action Team (FACT) process is getting a makeover! Following discussions regarding outreach and recruitment, this process will now be referred to as the "Getting Ahead" program. Task team members are working on creating a logo and updating mentor recruitment materials.
  - *The Getting Ahead program is in need of mentors.* Once participants complete their work sessions and set self-sufficiency goals, they are matched with mentors to help them meet their goals. Mentors offer encouragement and moral support along participants' path to self-sufficiency. For more information contact Kathy Stearns ([kstearns@gecac.org](mailto:kstearns@gecac.org)).
- A social media campaign to promote the [Gannon Human Services Directory](#) and increase awareness of this important resource continues to connect with local organizations to reach additional audiences. Messages post to Erie Together's Facebook and Twitter on the third of each month.
- The Healthy Life Self-Assessment task team is working to develop a distribution strategy for this new resource which takes a holistic (body, mind, spirit, relationship) approach to self-sufficiency. It can be viewed at [www.erietogether.org/healthy-life-self-assessment](http://www.erietogether.org/healthy-life-self-assessment).

### **Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development**

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) planning group has completed its development of a reentry strategy for (1) clients transitioning to law-abiding life from criminal networks, and (2) clients returning to the community from federal, state or county incarceration. Groundwork is now being laid to launch the ECRSSA. An employer summit is also being planned for the fall.
- A Diversity Barriers task team is developing a resource for employers. The piece includes relevant myths and facts, and benefits to having a diverse workforce, along with resources that employers can draw upon to help support their diverse workforce.

### **Miscellaneous:**

- Erie Together has a Community Engagement Committee charged with spreading the word throughout the community about what Erie Together is and does. Presentations for your organization or group can be scheduled through Nicole Wethli ([nicole@erietogether.org](mailto:nicole@erietogether.org)).

*"Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity  
where everyone can learn, work and thrive."*

**www.ErieTogether.org**