



Erie Together Activity Update **March 23, 2016**

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Erie Together continues its forward progress to achieve the community's goals as reflected in our "impact plans." These plans guide all of Erie Together's work, and provide context for understanding the overall movement. To access the impact plans, please visit <http://www.erietogether.org/impact-plans>.

The below bullets highlight select Erie Together activity over the last month. For additional information or to become more actively engaged in the Erie Together movement, please contact info@erietogether.org.

Action Team 1: Early Childhood Readiness and Success

- A new task team was formed to explore resources that exist for improving children's readiness and success in grades 1-3, in keeping with Erie Together's goal that 73% of Erie County children will be reading at or above proficient by the end of third grade by 2019-2020. More information to come.
- 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 and resources to reach more families.
- The Kindergarten Resource Distribution task team hosted a packing party to assemble Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits. These kits are made available to local families through partner organizations, and are designed to help parents work with their children to build kindergarten readiness skills. Erie Together's goal is to distribute 1,000 of these kits into the community this year and next, and to collect and analyze data on the effectiveness of the kits.
- A task team was formed to take a close look at Erie Together indicators and data collection as it relates to impact plan goals. This group will make recommendations to help ensure that impact is being measured appropriately and is painting a clear picture of community progress (or lack thereof).

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Action Team 2: Aligning Education to Careers

- The Career Street (www.careerstreeterie.org) task team is working with Career Street's executive director to secure additional participation in this countywide K-12 career exploration initiative. Additionally, the team is helping to enhance content on Career Street's website.
- A second task team is reviewing the annual 8th grade career awareness, exploration and preparation survey administered by Career Street in partnership with local public and diocesan schools in Erie County each May. The team is making slight revisions to the survey to help students more accurately answer key questions, and is also developing a script for teachers to use as they introduce the survey to students. The purpose of this team's work is to ensure we are collecting the most accurate data from 8th graders about their career awareness, exploration and preparation.
- A team has been assembled to focus on the development of a local college and career pathways system to better prepare today's students for tomorrow's careers. This work will be supported through a relationship with the National Center for College & Career Transitions (www.nc3t.com) who will provide technical assistance to the group.
- The More Caps and Gowns mentoring pilot project at Girard Middle School is producing positive results for the 6th grade student participants. Mercyhurst University has reflected on lessons learned through the Girard pilot and is now exploring opportunities to launch a similar effort with another local middle school.
- A *Best Practices for Parent Engagement* training is scheduled for April 21, 2016. 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. All of the trainings are provided free of charge. For more information visit www.erietogether.org.

Action Team 3: Individual and Family Stability

- A mentor training is being held on April 8th from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM at GECAC for individuals wishing to volunteer as mentors through the Family Action Team (FACT) process. For more information or a promotional poster to share with your network, please contact Kathy Stearns at kstearns@gecac.org.
 - Targeted mentor recruitment is underway with specific groups including yep!, labor unions, and others.
 - A new task team has been formed to create a 'buzz' around FACTs. The team will be reviewing existing materials and looking for ways to spread the word to increase participation.

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- Erie Together task teams developed a social media plan to promote the Gannon Human Services Directory (hsd.gannon.edu). Each month as a specific focus which links back to the directory. Like, follow, and share (@erietogether) on the 3rd of each month to help connect more families to this important resource. Gannon will also be sending a request for updates via email twice each year to ensure organizations are updating information.
- The Healthy Life Self-Assessment is a new resource from Erie Together. The checklist helps individuals see the importance of physical, mental, spiritual, and social relationships and goal setting as they work toward self-sufficiency. It can be viewed at www.erietogether.org/healthy-life-self-assessment.
- A new task team was formed to gather success stories from FACT participants. The group will work with past and present facilitators to help collect these stories and also to engage these participants in the broader Erie Together movement.

Action Team 4: Aligning Workforce and Economic Development

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) Planning Group recently held an informational session for potential service providers. The session included background on the alliance, strategy highlights, and a question and answer period for providers. The next steps for the ECRSSA are to: (1) secure funding; (2) work with partner organization to house, recruit and train staff; and (3) launch the ECRSSA.
- A task team focused on employer and employee satisfaction is working with CareerLink to gauge satisfaction with current workforce development supports. More to come.
- Erie Together is focused on helping to increase workplace diversity which will benefit local employers and the community alike. As a first step, a task team is using existing research and best practice information to put together a piece to help inform local organizations about the importance and positive implications of workplace diversity and inclusive leadership. Once this resource is finished and vetted with local employers, the group will consider appropriate next steps.

Miscellaneous:

- Erie Together will be presented with the Community Action Association of Pennsylvania (CAAP)'s 2016 Distinguished Community Engagement Award on April 21st in Harrisburg. This recognition is a testament to the tremendous work being done by all involved in the Erie Together movement.

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- Erie Together's Kindergarten Registration flyers are now available for distribution. The flyers include contact information for all 13 Erie County public school districts, as well as scheduled registration events. Visit www.erietogether.org/k-registration to see the flyer or contact Nicole (nicole@erietogether.org) for copies.
- United Way of PA is requesting support for providing \$1.5 million in state funding to support 2-1-1 across the commonwealth. Erie County and NWPA are the only areas in the state not currently covered. For more information or to show your support, please contact Del Birch at del@unitedwayerie.org or 814-456-2937 x235.
- McDowell High School Exposure Club's annual "Love Heals" concert will benefit Erie Together Kindergarten Readiness Tool Kits. The concert will be held in May 2016 and students are working hard to expand the concert with more acts and greater attendance this year.

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