



## **Erie Together Activity Update** **October 7, 2015**

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 in our "impact plans." These impact plans are the documents that guide all of Erie Together's work, and provide good context for understanding the overall movement. Each of the four Erie Together Action Teams has a specific impact plan. 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.

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

- 500 Kindergarten Readiness Parent Training Kits were distributed by the end of August. Pre- and post-survey data is currently being collected and analyzed to determine kit effectiveness. Supplies to replenish kits have been received; new kit assembly is currently underway to fulfill existing requests and new opportunities.
- Summer 2015 Block-by-Block events to raise awareness of importance early childhood education and third grade reading proficiency were successful in reaching local families. Additionally, Erie's Future Fund experienced an increase in call volumes after the Block by Block events. Plans are to expand reach during summer 2016 through partnerships with additional community entities.
- 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.
- Focus on identifying community-wide literacy support continues, and efforts are underway to build list and ultimately connect more families to resources available here.

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

- Career Street ([www.careerstreeterie.org](http://www.careerstreeterie.org)) is producing results. Data to date shows 93 businesses engaged; 119 existing experiences; 85 matches; and 4,400+ student career exploration experiences fulfilled since its launch in February 2014.

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- Regarding youth civic engagement, two important events are being planned: (1) a civics debate coordinated by Erie Times-News Newspapers In Education based on one or more of the Erie Vital Signs indicators; and (2) an event in partnership with Gannon University which will expose local students to civic responsibility and local, state and federal government officials and entities. More information to come.
- Erie Together's Life After High School checklist has been successfully piloted and is being distributed across the community. A separate task team focused on creating positive connections between families and post-secondary education and training institutions has been conducting focus groups with local students and parents to best determine needs. Parents of recent high school graduates now attending college should take this survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GradParents>.
- The More Caps and Gowns Project pilot kicked off at Girard School District on October 1, and the feedback has been exceptionally positive. This effort connects mentors with middle school-aged students to help enhance their lives and educational success. For more information or to become a mentor, contact [mary@erietogether.org](mailto:mary@erietogether.org).
- Erie Together and its partners, including United Way of Erie County, Unified Erie, and the Nonprofit Partnership held a free professional development training on fundraising to sustain youth services programs on October 7 at the Scottish Rite.

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

- The Family Action Team (FACTs) process is being expanded through relationships with several local social service organizations and parishes. Erie Together is in search of mentors to provide moral support to graduates as they work to achieve their self-sufficiency goals. For more information, please contact Kathy Stearns at [kstearns@gecac.org](mailto:kstearns@gecac.org).
- Erie Together is hosting a poverty simulation on October 16 at Sts. Peter & Paul Social Hall. Visit <http://www.erietogether.org/news/poverty-simulation-opportunity-october-2015> for more information and to register. Seating is limited, but some spots remain.
- Task teams to promote the Gannon Human Services Directory ([hsd.gannon.edu](http://hsd.gannon.edu)) and Veterans Portal of Northwestern PA (<http://www.veteransportal.com/>) continue to meet and advance their work. A second task team is working to identify new, creative ways to promote the availability of local services to those who need them to assist in their road to self-sufficiency.

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

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) Planning Group continues to meet once every two to three weeks to develop a strategy for “transitioning clients” returning to the Erie community. This group is working closely with the other legs of the Unified Erie violence reduction approach – prevention and enforcement – to create a safer community.
- Erie Together has been focused on helping employers connect with underemployed, unemployed, low income and minority individuals to help fill local jobs. An important piece of this is engaging the social service community early on to help identify and support candidates through the process. To that end, meetings to assist two local employers are scheduled: (1) Transportation Solutions; and (2) Maple Donuts. For more information contact [mary@erietogether.org](mailto:mary@erietogether.org).
- Task teams have been created to (1) measure employer and employee satisfaction with workforce development supports, (2) widely distribute Erie Together’s Work Readiness checklist, and (3) identify best-practices for diversity trainings within the workplace to help support the local workforce. More to come.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- The Erie Together Community Forum will take place on November 17 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Bayfront Convention Center. More information is forthcoming, and will also be found at [www.erietogether.org](http://www.erietogether.org).
- Several outreach presentations have taken place or are planned with local businesses, industry, educators, and others. The purpose is to raise awareness about our community’s work through Erie Together and advance the movement. Notable events include, but are not limited to:
  - UPMC Hamot Leadership (August 2015)
  - Erie County school superintendents (September 2015)
  - Erie County directors of curriculum, assessment and instruction (September 2015)
  - AmeriCorps VISTA Lake Effect Leaders (September 2015)
  - Episcopal Church leaders (October 2015)
  - Upcoming educator panels (October and December 2015)

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