



## **Erie Together Activity Update** **October 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. The impact plans can be found at [www.erietogether.org/impact-plans](http://www.erietogether.org/impact-plans).

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

- Block by Block events organized by Erie Together's Early Childhood Awareness Task Team and funded by ECGRA took place throughout the summer. The purpose of these events is to increase awareness of the importance of early childhood education and success and third grade reading proficiency, and to connect families to local resources. The six events reached more than 259 parents and the households of more than 300 children under age 5. Volunteers committed 250 hours of their time and media mentions were in excess of 231,000. The number of children and families reached far exceeded last year's results. Visit [www.erietogether.org/early-learning](http://www.erietogether.org/early-learning) to learn more.
- The Kindergarten Resource Distribution Team is planning a tool kit packing party with students from the Barber National Institute on September 26 to finish the remaining 100 kits needed to reach our goal of 1,000. The team will also be hosting trainings for organizations wishing to distribute the kits. Tool kits, checklists, and progress charts are available for organizations to distribute. Contact [nicole@erietogether.org](mailto:nicole@erietogether.org) to request copies.
- 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.
- OCDEL will be hosting a 2016 Family Engagement Conference in Erie this year. The event will take place on October 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM at the Bayfront Convention Center. Visit [www.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=1855085](http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/?eventid=1855085) for more information.

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

- Erie Together, in coordination with Gannon University, U.S. Senator Pat Toomey's office, and Career Street hosted a Youth Civic Engagement Symposium on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>. The event focused on levels and branches of government and featured speakers from federal, state, county, and city government along with faculty from Gannon University. Erie Together received overwhelmingly positive feedback following the event.

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- Career Street is gearing up for a new school year. New experiences are being added to the site and a new *virtual tour* capability has been added to allow businesses to showcase their facility via video.
- The Extended Time Programs Task Team continues to research existing models to connect more students with high-quality programs.
- Erie Together is facilitating a College and Career Pathways task team consisting of nearly all local school districts and other relevant stakeholder groups including business/manufacturing, workforce development and others. This team is making great progress, having developed a working definition of “college, career and life readiness,” and a scan of local pathways activity within the schools, and the group is now beginning to share best practices across districts. The districts have set a goal to elevate their pathways activity by at least one level over the next 18 months as defined by the National Center for College and Career Transitions (NC3T). NC3T is providing technical assistance to the group.
- Erie Together’s More Caps and Gowns Project is in its second year of existence, working to connect more caring adults to local youth to enhance their lives and educational success. Girard School District, in cooperation with Penn State Behrend, is entering its second year of mentoring efforts, and Mercyhurst University launched a new program with JoAnna Connell School on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Erie’s Public Schools is working within the More Caps and Gowns Project in another way to launch “Check and Connect” in one of its schools.
- A task team has been analyzing the recommendations collected at Erie Together’s Cross Team meeting in June regarding how to better engage high school students in their local community. The 43 ideas have been prioritized and the team is working to establish next steps to engage students.

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

- The Getting Ahead program (formerly known as FACTs) has a new logo and website. Visit [www.erietogether.org/getting-ahead](http://www.erietogether.org/getting-ahead) to see the newest updates. The program will soon have new outreach materials, including Bridges Out of Poverty training flyers, a mentor recruitment brochure, and partner organization packet. Efforts continue to expand the program through partnerships with local organizations.
- The Human Services Directory Promotion and Reducing the Stigma Task Teams continue outreach through a social media campaign and are identifying ways to track success of this campaign. Postings can be found by searching #ErieHelp on Facebook and Twitter. You can help by liking, sharing, retweeting, or commenting on posts.
- A task team has developed a short evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of the Healthy Life Self-Assessment checklist. Contact [nicole@erietogether.org](mailto:nicole@erietogether.org) to request copies.

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

- The Erie County Reentry Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA) has officially launched with the hire of new program director, Sheila Silman. Hiring of case managers and a call-in coordinator is underway and the alliance has already hosted its first event, the Erie County Reentry Workforce Summit. The summit was held on September 27th and included discussion topics for employers and a career fair for job seekers.
- The 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. The team is also discussing ways to distribute this resource and measure its impact.
- A Licensing Barriers Task Team has been established to discuss the need for an awareness campaign on the importance of obtaining a driver's license for employment and other purposes. The team has done some initial research on local statistics and discussed causes behind the lack of licenses, reasons why having this type of identification is important and the resources available to help.

#### **Miscellaneous:**

- The board of trustees of the Rural Regional College of Northern PA (RRC) is scheduled to complete the development of the plan to establish the educational institution by the end of 2016. Recently, the group conducted a series of stakeholder surveys throughout the nine-county region and analyzed the results which will help inform the community college plan. Once the plan is approved by Commonwealth of PA officials, the RRC will be established, and the board hopes to begin offering classes in the fall of 2017.
- A feasibility study for an Erie Manchester Bidwell National Center for Arts and Technology has been underway for nearly a year. The interim progress report is available at [www.erietogether.org](http://www.erietogether.org). The study identified healthcare and food service industries as a priority. The steering committee leading this effort is currently reviewing final recommendations and will be considering if and how to move forward over the next few months.
- FAFSA has a new filing procedure which allows families to complete the forms as early as October 1<sup>st</sup> using the prior year's data. PHEAA has free materials and resources available for families and will be hosting a number of "FAFSA Night" informational sessions for families. Ask your local district or [asloan@pheaa.org](mailto:asloan@pheaa.org) for a list of upcoming events.

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