 **Community Foundation of Tompkins County**

**Listening & Learning Session Notes: Collective Impact 11/13/14**

See corresponding PowerPoint on Community Foundation website under news (<http://www.cftompkins.org/news-and-events/news/2014/11/collective-impact-material-from-october-28-2014-public-meeting/>) “Collective Impact PowerPoint Presentation from Oct. 28th, 2014 Public Meeting”

Presentations:

**GEORGE FERRARI** intro…..starts with a common vision, shared measurements, fosters mutual activity, encourages continuous conversation and learning, strong backbone function.

**JANET COTRACCIA** welcomes, talked about 2 yr grant cycle, in the midst of it. Recently convened a review team to see progress of the funded programs. Talked about food bank’s evaluation of their programs in mobile delivery; AFCU’s VITA program; workforce diversity program for Tompkins County; expanded Groton Youth employment program; FingerLakes ReUse’s expanded capacity with new pickups; expanded CSA opportunities for people without means; Civic Ensemble; and more…..Hitting a large cros-section of providers and services in our community. Encourage self-adjustment and reflection and correction. Talked about Building Bridges original community forum with 200 people here in this space. Reviewed the CFTC’s pairing up with Park Foundation and private donors to fund scholarships for Tamarack Institute on Collective Impact Summit in Toronto last month. Those who attended the Summit from Tompkins County are :

Phoebe Brown (Cayuga Medical Center), Randy Quackenbush (Food Bank of the Southern Tier), Karim Beers (Get Your Green Back- reducing carbon footprint), Brigid Hubberman (Family Reading Partnership), Leslie Ackerman (Alternatives Federal Credit Union/ Entrepreneurship Initiative), Kirby Edmonds (Dorothy Cotton Institute/ Building Bridges), Natasha Thompson (Natasha Thompson) and Schelley Michell Nunn (Re-Entry after incarceration Project)

**KIRBY EDMONDS:**

Introduced 8 in slide. Represent several conversations that started before the forum, some started after; the 8 people represent a connection to all of the programs.

**LESLIE ACKERMAN:**

Went to summit with no familiarity of concept of collective impact. NOT a new thing, people have been collaborating and having impact, but many of us don’t work as collectively as we’d like. People are working in silos.

It’s not about a formula or a set of steps to get to an end result; it’s about how we work together so that our mutual efforts will have impact on problems.

Five conditions of collective impact:

**1). common agenda**

**2). shared measurements**

**3). mutually reinforcing activities**

**4). Continuous communicationi**

**5) backbone organization/ function**- Backbone exists to support this effort – more than just bureaucratic administration. Need support to help keep the group together, esp. with communication, measurements, etc., to make sure it keeps progressing.

**KARIM BEERS:**

Shared story of DesMoines Iowa – lots of groups working on eliminating poverty, success of children in school districts – but no progress, but increase in problems. Contacted Paul at Tamarack – 100 people brought together, from business, govt., nonprofits, residents. Spent 2 full days together, hearing stories, different pts of view. One rule: no plan for next 12 months. 3 things: gather more data to understand; have 1,000 community conversations; look for quick wins – can we address affordable housing, e.g.?

12-18 months to start things off. A very careful process.

**RANDY QUACKENBUSH:**

Collaboration Spectrum:

Compete: Competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention.

Co-exist: no systematic connection between agencies.

Communicate: interagency info sharing

Cooperate: as needed, then informal interaction on discrete activities or projects.

Coordinate

Collaborate

Integrate

MORE (full descriptions in Powerpoint)—where do we feel we are now?

**NATASHA THOMPSON:**

Different Types of Problems:

SIMPLE: making soup, right recipe essential, same results every time. KNOWN.

Complication: sending a rocket to the moon. Formulae needed, repeated with success. KNOWABLE

Complex: Raising a child. No right recipes, can’t predict results. UNKNOWABLE.

**PHOEBE BROWN:**

This was really something exciting – went with pessimistic attitude and was very surprised!

Shared what it felt like for her…..dynamic speakers, touched her heart, everyone talked about getting the community involved. 50% of the community should be involved at the table – people should have ownership to develop the plan, not buy in after a plan is already in place. Ownership is everyone at the table together to make a successful plan.

Content experts AND context experts at the table—both of them

**KIRBY EDMONDS:**

Rethinking how we solve complicated problems. Need to rethink who needs to be engaged.

Who’s involved in understanding the problem itself we’re trying to deal with?? Can’t make plans until we deeply understand the problem. This is a learning activity, to rethink what we learned and adapt our processes and plans informed by what we’ve learned.

How people work together: think system strategy and not program strategy.

Strategies that actually move systems:

1). Increase coordination

2). Enhance services

3). Policy

4). Learning through a pilot

Example:

ERIE TOGETHER…..working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive.

NOT a social service agency or program, but a countywide civic movement. 4 action teams.

LEARN: early childhood readiness and success; aligning education to careers

WORK: balancing workforce and economic development

THRIVE: individual and family stability

Erie website has plenty of PDF files on their website to learn more about it….

Indicators of Successful Implementation (see slide)

20- different action groups, coordinated by 3 staff with a backbone group funded by three different funders

QUESTIONS AND CONVERSATION

George: we’re exploring whole concept of Collective impact. Look at the questions.

1. What role should CF have to advance collective impact in Tompkins County?
2. What resources are necessary for CI to have powerful local results?
3. What groups or sectors or communities need better engagement with CI?
4. Is there one issue or concern that has sufficient urgency to advance CI as a new way of solving it?
5. What concerns do you have that you want to see change but that the current approach has not resulted in the desired outcomes?

Attendee: concern of community at family court advisory council – judges worried about heroin. This is a huge issue of concern – can it fit with CI?

Attendee: 3rd Q – how has engagement been here? Read about Stanford project, involvement with business is critical, shared metrics speaks to a business mindset, but it’s also process heavy and how to reconcile those and engage business community?

Response: strengths of business community were able to give some good feedback and overcome this in what they heard.

Feedback: support of backbone group is the make or break of CI. In Tompkins County we have a lot of organizations and don’t always share and are always competing for same funding. CI should relieve that stress – could CF fund that backbone since no one else could locally??

Attendee: early childhood development collaboration had great conversation with president of corning/Elmira foundation – backbone for Chemung County school readiness project. Support to assets already being invested. Would like to see CFTC also do a piece of ours.

Attendee: urgent issues are around equity and climate change.

Phoebe: their project went to each stakeholder and have them involved. Very important to have community at the table – the community needs to be there and helping. Relationships can be built between people who have nothing and people who have everything. Nothing can work properly without relationships being built.

Attendee: importance of a common agenda. Would climate change be on a common agenda here? Have we already done that in this community? Maybe role of CFTC to be instigator or motivator to get to a common agenda.

George talked about convening and catalyzing function.

Attendee: if we took climate change and equity and tried to build a common agenda and a backbone organization to serve those – very complex problem. This conversation could be very different with different people in the room? How did Erie build this common agenda and get a backbone organization?

Attendee: wants to clarify re-entry plan that MRC is undertaking – reentry for ex offenders who are transitioning back into their community. First focus group had ex offenders, families, and their advocates. Employment, parole, substance abuse, housing, transportation. Next group will be service providers for this group.

Attendee: has been here 7 years. Full of folks here who are hootie tooties…..how do we find and define what that community is? George responds we’re not planning now…

Kareem: CI is useful framework for collaboration but also for learning --- advance, try something out, adapt to it, see what happens, unpredictable, doesn’t seem to be a very sexy thing to fund without certain outcomes. Role of CF – funders should accept ambiguity, not claim responsibility for any result, say that a group participated in an effort -- tolerance of funders to accept that, accept the learning phase.

Phoebe: we can use other communities to see what it might look like – but our community is unique and has its own “issues.” CF could be a stimulant to keep conversation going.

Kirby: “time is too short and things are too bad to be pessimistic”. “Managers would rather live with a problem they can’t solve than with a solution that they can’t control”. How do you do your job if you’re responsible for controlling an organization and you can’t predict what will happen with CI??

Help people who are uncomfortable with ambiguity be able to sit and explore problems. Role for a backbone organization?

BACKBONE FUNCTIONS rather than backbone organization….not necessarily a new infrastructure organization….

Attendee: here 4.5 years, spends a lot of time on the road. Issue of concern, urgency? Has heard heroin, gentrification, what does sufficient urgency in this community look like??

Attendee: people in poverty have to share their experiences and get to root cause of what their problem is.

What are the context efforts? Everyone has a different urgent issue around poverty or climate change or racism or whatever? Many many sets of urgent situations.

Attendee: read about counselors in backbone organizations?? (can’t’hear) Languages were different.

Also loved what was said about some things just not being sexy.

Attendee: Collaborative Solutions Network? Took on six years ago dealing with children with issues (can’t hear). Now have 150 people in the network, lots of families in network who are being affected. Has worked with Kirby for a strategic plan. Moved the mark on how they were working together, instead of around certain rates and changes in rates. Learned how to have conversations….feels it’s about relationships and the process, don’t need one urgent issue or marker to move. Racker center is their backbone organization – this group has no money.

Attendee: lots of things happening throughout the community that no one knows about. For example, how many people know about mayor’s drug policy? What else is happening in the community? We don’t’ know what all those are. Would be nice to know if this info could be collected in one place.

www.CFTompkins.org – slides from Tamarack 8 are there, lots of other info about collective impact….

Attendee: sees potential here for this way of thinking about how to be together in a community is very exciting – refers back to Erie Together, see what they’re doing as a powerful catalyst. Everyone has a different “we” – the city shows up a lot, but the “we” should also be the county. What does it mean in Groton? In Enfield?

Attendee: talked about speaking up for older people’s problems, lets think of solutions intergenerationally, let’s figure out how people can find out about what people are doing. People not on the listserv or not connected here don’t know about any of this.

Attendee: issues of county, city, affordable housing, land use (could be city or town issue) – multiple systems in place that are around a lot of these complex issues. Some of these need to be addressed within existing systems, jurisdictions.

Need SYSTEMS thinking, not PROGRAM thinking.

**Janet** wrapping up – thinking about WE…..referred to the incorrect reference to the ITHACA community Foundation, when we work so hard to define ourselves by the county and all communities. How do we bring that context group into the content arena? We’re not always solidly in one of those four areas – we overlap. Paul Schmidt’s quote about the importance of being intentional about creating culture, that’s what we’re doing here. We need to create a culture so that we can say honestly what’s in our hearts and minds. Tonight has been a wonderful example of that. Call me!! Keep continuing the conversation. We use these sessions from past years to shape grant cycles – and those can be counterproductive to collective impact culture we’re trying to embrace and grow. How do we reframe grant cycles, so that we’re not competing but encouraging COLLECTIVE impact? CF has a big role in growing the pie, not limiting the pie that’s doled out. CF has a role in relationship building.

Thank you for everyone’s engaged and enthusiastic participation!

END