

Cradle to Career

Description

Overall Vision:

All youth and their families have what they need to ensure that our children and youth, pre-birth to age 24 are successful at every stage of development. This means that they are physically and emotionally healthy and active community members on-track for living wage employment.

Desired Outcomes

- **Belong.** All residents feel valued, safe, included, and able to participate in shaping community decisions.
- **Learn.** All children and adults have the knowledge and skills needed to build a good life for themselves and those around them.
- **Work.** All residents who wish to work have adequate opportunities for meaningful employment at an income sufficient to sustain themselves and their families.
- **Flourish.** All children have a safe, nourishing childhood. All individuals and families are able to meet their basic human needs, enjoy life and achieve their full potential.
- **Sustain.** All our behaviors and decisions ensure that we can restore and preserve the natural world.

Need:

- This group represents almost 40% of the county's population
- 40% free and reduced lunch
- 20% food insecure
- Academic performance gaps among low income and students of color when compared to the general population
- Chronic poverty creates a variety of problems related to physical and emotional health as well as barriers to living wage employment

Some “Quick Wins”

- Reached consensus on some operating values
- Becoming a CTA project
 - Represents commitment of partners to work together to provide backbone functions
- MBK grant proposal
 - First major collaborative project
- AYR action plan nearing completion
 - Represents a step in establishing an overall action agenda
- Single K readiness assessment
 - Opportunity to engage all of the school districts in the county and in the TST BOCES counties
- Having Engaged Cornell as partner
 - Represents a significant opportunity to leverage resources as well as representing almost half of the age-group

Cradle to Career Leadership Group

- Building Bridges Initiative
- Child Development Council
- Childhood Nutrition Collaborative (GreenStar Community Projects)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County,
- Early Childhood Development Collaborative
- Engaged Cornell, Collaborative Solutions Network,
- Franziska Racker Centers
- Greater Ithaca Activities Center
- Ithaca City School District
- Ithaca Youth Bureau
- My Brother's Keeper
- Southside Community Center
- Tompkins Cortland Community College
- Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
- Tompkins County Council of Governments (TCCOG)
- The Tompkins County Health Department
- Tompkins County Youth Services
- TST BOCES
- Village at Ithaca

Represents an experiment in organizing the backbone function

Group is still in formation and now working on engagement of youth and families

Shared Measures

- **Work on a goals framework is still underway but we will identify specific goals for children and youth, families, organizations, employers and government.**
- **AYR indicators (e.g. graduation rates, incarceration rates, family income, obesity, self-reporting of high school students)**

This work has been underway for over a year and represents a first step toward some agreed upon indicators of success.

Mutually Reinforcing Activities

My Brother's Keeper application process (included ICSD, City of Ithaca, GIACA, Cradle to Career, Village at Ithaca, Childhood Nutrition Collaborative, Ithaca Youth Bureau, Public Service Center)

Communication-A Work in Progress

- **Building Bridges Newsletter**
- **Email**
- **Google docs**
- **Considering work on a community-wide communications platform**
- **Survey to collective impact working groups to identify communication needs and methods**

Engaging People With Lived Experience

What's been done:

- Focus groups
- Interviews

What's planned:

- Engage families in K readiness assessment process an on leadership group.
- Pre-natal interview project for Early Childhood Development Collaborative
- Identify youth organizers to participate in leadership group
- Interviews

Some Things We've Learned

- The importance and the difficulty of communicating across the various sectors and across the county
- There is shared frustration with the slow pace of progress given the urgency of need
- Difficulty of determining a shared understanding of what authentic engagement means
- The challenge of balancing the need for action against the need for not acting until all voices are fully engaged and included.
- The challenge of needing to respond to the urgency of people's life situations against the need to slow down to really understand the nature of the systems that are in the way of progress.
- Issues related to including new people in a process that has been underway
- The importance of effective ways to include new voices without having to start over
- There is a widely shared understanding of the need to work together
- The importance of figuring out who takes credit for what

What's Next?

- Engage youth and families in the leadership group
- Engage Ithaca College
- Complete goals framework
- Reach consensus on community-wide action strategy and strategies
- Finish pathways documents
- Work on communications platform(s) and developing effective communication systems
- Determine needs for data and how best to make data available across communities and organizations
- Develop a common kindergarten assessment
- Work on the goals and objectives outlined in the My Brother's Keeper proposal and expand these to include elementary schools

How you can participate:

- Go to AYR community gatherings this fall
- Review Cradle to Career Documents and give feedback
- Contact tfckirby@aol.com