

Power of We Consortium **Meeting Minutes – November 18, 2011**

Present: John Roy Castillo, Neal Valley, Kelly Young, Bob Sheehan, Randy Bell, Jessica Yorke, Jenelle Jagmin, Pauline Pasch, Justin Sheehan, Lisa Chambers, Karen Jennings, Graham Pierce, Lori Eva, Bill Nelton, Maureen Hirten, Olga Hernandez-Patino, Ken Sperber, Sandy Geller, Laura Sager, Micki Fuhrman, Brendon Fegar, Lynne Martinez, Eric Schertzing, Alex Bryan, Susan Moriarty, Debbie Edokpolo, Brad Patterson, Heather Rae McAlvey, Terry Link, Peggy Roberts, Angela Austin, Vincent Delgado.

Welcome, introductions and announcements: Co-chair Vincent Delgado opened the meeting.

Our Community Collaboratives

A. Infant Mortality Coalition:

Infant mortality is often viewed as a measure of the overall health of a community. It reflects the status of maternal health, the accessibility and quality of primary health care, and the availability of supportive services in the community. Lisa Chambers, Program Coordinator at ICHD and co-chair of the Infant Mortality Coalition will provide an overview of local data surrounding infant mortality and the disparities that exist in pregnancy outcomes for different racial populations. PWC members will be asked to consider how their work impacts, and is impacted by, these data.

Vincent reminded the membership that the *Power of We Consortium* supports 12 coalitions, all of which play a role in working toward equity and sustainability for our community. The Consortium encourages and supports any efforts to collaborate across coalitions.

Lisa Chambers, Co-chair of the Infant Mortality Coalition (IMC), explained that infant mortality – the rate of death for infants under 1 year -- is a critical indicator of community health. The IMC is 20+ years old. It was previously funded by a grant from MDCH and previously was able to support a Fetal Infant Mortality Review team (FIMR). That funding ended 2 years ago causing the IMC to redirect its resources. The Capital Area Safe Sleep Coalition has since merged with IMC and a new brochure has been created.

Lisa showed a brief portion of the video “When the Bough Breaks” which posits that institutionalized racism is the cause of unrelenting stress, which in turn can cause African-American women’s babies to be born prematurely and/or to die at a significantly increased rate over that of white babies, regardless of the socioeconomic or educational status of the mothers. The infant mortality of black babies in Ingham County is over 3 times the rate of white babies. Lisa then shared a story of a single mother in Ingham County and invited dialogue at individual table pods and with the whole group.

B. Community Coalition for Youth:

Angela Waters Austin will provide an update on the Ingham Lansing Community Coalition for Youth’s Continuum of Care Strategy and invite PWC members to engage in multi-sector, cross-systems partnerships with the Ingham Change Initiative, Birth to Work, Ingham Mentoring

Partnership and the Peace & Prosperity Youth Action Movement to promote youth leadership, close the educational achievement gap, and increase graduation rates. PWC members will be invited to take action by initiating new collaborations and partnerships with the Ingham Lansing Community Coalition for Youth.

Angela Austin, Community Coalition for Youth (CCY) Coordinator, opened the meeting by challenging the membership with a couple of questions to ponder: “What difference could it make if, as a Consortium, and via our respective agencies, we were intentional about partnering with neighborhoods, schools, and the faith community? What might this look like?” She framed the conversation by sharing a recent experience where a racist comment was made during a telephone conversation, where the person with whom she was talking did not know she was African-American. She also shared information about the “Stop the Violence” movement growing via social media in Lansing as a reaction to the recent violent deaths of young men of color.

The membership was referred to the Continuum of Care for Youth in Ingham County document, which has gone through several iterations over the years. The high school drop-out rate in Lansing schools is at 25%, but is double for just children of color. Angela referenced the concept of “generational transfer of trauma” and the impact on our community’s youth. We must address this, or face deficits over time as the trauma continues to increase.

Angela spoke of the 4 initiatives in which she and many others are engaged: Peace and Prosperity Movement, Ingham Change Initiative, CCY, and the *Power of We Consortium*. She provided an overview of the various areas of focus for each initiative, and how they overlap and enhance each other. The youth of the P&PM are being coached on how to approach the Lansing School District regarding issues they feel need change. A Mentoring Partnership has developed over the years that seeks to provide youth with relationships with caring adults, shown to be essential as youth transition across developmental periods. Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Black Male Consortium are actively working within this partnership.

Angela asked each table pod to discuss how our community might look different if we work more relationally. Ideas that were later brought to the whole group included:

- Neighborhood open houses
- Check out the Headwaters Foundation for Justice, which addresses policy change
- Increase the word, and idea, of “empowerment” in organizational mission statements
- Organizations need to make intentional efforts to make cross-organizational connections

Dialogue for Collective Impact

“Our Common Future”

There are both a myriad set of challenges and opportunities before us as a community and as members of the human family. In an increasing partisan and divisive climate we fall prey to debating for win-lose outcomes. How might we create conditions that enable creativity and emergent solutions to come to the

surface? How might we gather and utilize our co-intelligence? Terry Link will lead us in a conversation about possibilities to create such conditions in our community.

Vincent opened this discussion with a reference to “generative work”, the act of “thinking about thinking.” Terry Link, former director of the Greater Lansing Food Bank, founder and former director of the Sustainability Office at MSU, and long-time speaker/facilitator, was introduced. Terry has established a new entity called Starting Now, LLC (www.startingnowllc.com).

Terry referred to a handout entitled “Our Common Future” which explores the idea that debating important issues in the community focuses too much on winners and losers, on either/or outcomes. Our culture has shifted to where the debates are all about winning, versus coming to collective judgment. An emergent, synthetic idea comes from seeing both sides, not just about espousing what you already believe. Chaos Theory touches on this by taking advantage of fertile ground of ideas within chaos.

Terry asked members to complete a short, written Values Survey wherein each person rated the importance of environment, economic, and social values. Assuming we all hold multiple values around these issues, the survey forces one to confront ones own thoughts.

Terry next focused on the handout entitled “Dialog, Deliberation, and Choice-creating” (www.DynamicFacilitation.com) which defines the difference between these three actions. Various techniques – World Café, Appreciative Inquiry, Polarity Management, Wisdom Councils -- can be used to help move people to a new way of thinking about issues. Terry suggested that this community might embrace the idea of holding forums around the community, using new processes, to create new ways of thinking, and to learn how to solve multiple problems at the same time. The idea is not to form a formal organization, but rather to just come together and let it grow. The question is how to do this, and who would support it? Terry urged the membership to consider this discussion and contact him with ideas and/or commitments to assist with the process.

Next meeting of the Power of We Consortium: January 20, 2012