

Green St Promise Community Meeting Notes
February 10, 2016
Root Social Justice Center, Williams St.

Introductions:

We each took a minute to describe how our childhood experiences effected the way we participate in groups today—what roles we gravitate towards and what **roles** we stretch to. We'll revisit this list each time we meet as an accountability tool.

Community Café Report Outs and Planning

Report of the 3/7/16 Community Conversation at Dianne's house:

Three parents of young children attended this meeting, one mother a returning participant from the last meeting, a father of two, and a young mother of a toddler. This meeting was notable for its mix of ages and life experiences, and the host mentioned a desire to look for ways to continue and foment conversations among community members with varied backgrounds. The questions developed by the Promise Community members were used to guide the conversation, after reviewing their categories.

- How do our words and actions help children develop good interaction skills? *modeling conflict, helping them express what they want, it can be instructive to let kids work things out, scaffolded support, autonomy vs. support, "When do they start moving towards internalizing rather than just following the rules?" "Sometimes he seems relieved when I say "It's bedtime."*
- Social Connections: When do you enjoy seeing folks? *"When I've been home for too long." "Running into them, a feature of a small town." "School pickup and drop off." Some conversations on inhabiting public spaces, that it's a great feature of the town now: how could we enhance them?*
- Promise Community Category: It Takes a Village. *Two participants talked about the support of the new mother's group, how they can come assist in a variety of ways. The facebook page Brattleboro Parents' Network was mentioned, possibility of clothing swaps, a childcare carpooling list, the Parent Meditation group offered by Insight, with childcare.*
- Concrete Support: Why Do You Live Here? *"The circus school", "Work", "Because I had a child, and there's more services", "We can have one car", "Access to town services, public services, public transport", "The arts we can walk to", "Pretty amazing # of resources for a community of its size."*
- The group had a discussion about class, integration, and diversity. *"Untapped potential in the schools with the class differential", "I remember kids of color staying together at BUHS, popular white kids being separate", "What is the invitation to converse about race and class?", "How can you not have these conversations as they come up?", "Not a simple task.". "Maybe facilitated conversations about the diversity in town could have ripple effects", "Draw people to these events with flyers and food."*

Themes Identified from this Community Conversation:

- Opportunity for cross class dialogue in the school
- Families know about opportunities that exist in the town and build on them
- Context -who gets to own and lead conversation
- Use of public space
- Container for discussing difficult things: in pods, for children, for adults
- Supporting and scaffolding children to learn about and work through conflict

Next Steps for Community Conversations

- Ishana is beginning to plan one with a neighbor. Ishana would like help, and Dianne or Emile will attend her first Community Conversation to assist with facilitation.
- Dianne plans on having another Community Conversation with the folks who have been attending conversations at her house. She will invite one of these participants to continue these conversations (without her), and Emilie offered to assist the next incarnation of this group.
- Dianne intends to create another pod for the downtown artist community, and the planning for this has begun.
- Lisa is planning to help with this community artist Conversation, and is considering having a pod that is focused on Stuart Place neighborhood.
- Emilie is assisting Lacey's Community Cafe on 3/11/16 at Kid's Playce.
- Chad is organizing the next Building Bright Futures meeting to become a Community Conversation, on April 13 4-6.

Lacey's invitation language is great, and will be shared in these minutes for other Community Conversation planners to use. The team thinks common language is a useful goal.

Lacey's Community Conversation Invitation Language (copied from facebook)
Come share your thoughts about how you make it work as a parent here in Southern Vermont. We are interested in knowing about what practices help you manage your life. This is a discussion that is open to all inputs and views; kids are welcome as well! Food will be served.

You might be asking yourself, "Why is doing this going to help me? How is my opinion going to be heard?"

A neighborhood in Brattleboro has been targeted by the State of Vermont for a \$200,000 grant to help build the community and improve our children's lives. The Brattleboro Promise Community meets once a month as a group to try and determine what we as a community could need. We thought that getting input from the parents around the area could tell us about their positive and negative experiences in order to help us plan for the

future and benefit everyone around. Seven Promise Communities were chosen throughout the state and we are lucky to be one of them! Read more about the initiative's beginning here:

<http://vtdigger.org/2015/04/05/first-seven-promise-communities-selected/>

This is not the only meet we will be having, so if you are unable to make it please stay in contact via this group or email myself at: laceymelee@gmail.com

Retreat Planning:

The group did some planning for the full day Retreat.

- Timing: We narrowed to two dates (April 2nd and 9th) and will give folks a chance to vote via email through next week.
- Location: Emilie's house. 528 Goodenough Rd. We'll arrange some carpooling closer to the day.
- Childcare: Please plan ahead and talk to Emilie if you think you'll need this—as it's a full day on-site childcare might not be the best solution—but it might. . .
- Agenda: Data review, Fun, Planning Next Steps, Space for reflection. Emilie will be refining the agenda with Chad and Lisa, but if anyone else would like to get involved please let her know. Or if you have a particular expertise or activity to contribute please let us know.
- Food: We'll cater lunch but ask folks to bring treats for snacking. Please let us know if you have any food restrictions.

“Parking Lot:”

- Landlord Association meeting- property owners and their roles. Emilie will attend the April Landlord Association Meeting to share Promise Community work.
- Creative things in public spaces: we'll check in with Erin Maile

Announcements:

- April is the month of the Young Child, and Chad shared brochures and posters with many free fun events for families.
- Nimbus Dance Works performance on Thurs. March 31 at Green St School. This ½ hour performance blends professional dancers and school & community members in an original piece called *Memo*. Free.
- Community Forum on FEET and Groundworks Drop In Center will be in June-- date TBA.

- Also a walking audit of the FEET neighborhood re: sidewalks, crosswalks, driving mirrors etc. An official “safe ways to school” form is used for this process, and Ishana is looking for volunteers to take the walk.

The next Promise Community Meeting will be the daylong Retreat. This will be held at Emilie Kornheiser’s house **on either April 2nd or 9th, please vote.** Subsequent Promise Community planning meetings will return to the Root Justice Center on Williams St.