COMMUNITY ENGAGED CHANGE: THE WHITELY EXPERIENCE

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Objectives:

Introduce “Immersive Learning” and Ball State’s Strategic Plan

Share Successes and Challenges from Faculty, Student, and Community Partner Perspectives

Facilitate Discussion to Identify “Scalable” Characteristics and Future Opportunities
One priority of the plan is to provide each undergraduate student with the opportunity to participate in an immersive learning experience. These opportunities allow students to transform traditional classroom information into knowledge, judgment, and—ultimately—into action. Students learn to develop real-world solutions to real-world problems and graduate ready for the global workplace.
Characteristics (7)

- Carry academic credit
- Engage participants in an active learning process that is student-driven but guided by a faculty mentor
- Produce a tangible outcome or product (a business plan, policy recommendation, book, play, or DVD)
- Involve at least one team of students, often working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature
- Include community partners creating an impact on the larger community as well as on student participants
- Focus on student learning outcomes
- Help students define a career path or make connections to a profession or industry
FROM IMMERSIVE LEARNING TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
What is Community Engagement

The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997

Goals of community engagement are to:

- Build trust
- Enlist new resources and allies
- Create better communication
- Improve overall health outcomes as successful projects evolve into lasting collaborations

- CDC, 1997; Shore, 2006; Wallerstein, 2002

Community service providers and researchers need community members as much as community members need community service providers and researchers.
Community Engagement Approach

- Develop Relationships and Build Trust
- Redefine “Experts”
- Share Leadership
- Open Communication with Community Members
- Consider Social Contracts/Obligations
- Plan AND Coordinate
- Co-produce Products and Services
Financial vs. Social Contracts

Designing for Generosity
Minimizes Contractual Overhead
Planning and Coordination

Financial vs. Social Contracts

Below Average: ~80%

Hire

Contest

Single Contributions
Co-Production

- Professor Elinor Ostrom, 2009 Nobel Prize in Economics
- The design and implementation of a program through collaborative decisions between a client and a service professional
- For more information:
  - [http://www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org) - New Economics Foundation
  - [http://www.wix.com/fiwellness/coproduction](http://www.wix.com/fiwellness/coproduction) - Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology
If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.

– Aboriginal Activist Group, Queensland AU, 1970s and presented by Lilla Watson at the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi
FINDING THE WIN-WINS!

EDUCATION

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Personal and Professional Development
Successes and Challenges

Schools in the Context of Community
Involve ALL
Honors Colloquium
Community Transformation
Schools in the Context of Community

- 10-15 minute Overview
Involve ALL – Developing a Wellness Charter

- “Best Practices” in other communities
- Conversations with community members
  - Focus Group Discussions
  - Door-to-Door Canvassing
  - Community Meeting Participation
- Iterative Process
- Bright Spots Documents

*Free cultures get what they celebrate*

– Dean Kamen (Inventor and Entrepreneur)
Co-Producing a Blueprint
INTRODUCTION

The Whitely Community

The mission of the Whitely Community is to continue to improve quality of life by creating a clean, safe and decent environment that fosters learning.

The Whitely community is located just northeast of Downtown Muncie. It is bounded on the south by South Boulevard, on the east by Pendleton Avenue, on the north by Muncie Avenue and on the west by Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard.

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PART 1
Purpose, Mission & Vision

Purpose
The purpose of this document is to develop a blueprint to help improve the health and wellbeing of the Whaley community. This information can serve as a framework to capture the collective vision of this community leader.

Mission
The mission of this initiative is to support and enhance the wellbeing of the Whaley community by improving the quality of life across five priority areas. These areas include community pride and engagement, community programs and resources, healthy foods, safety, and education.

Vision
The vision for the Whaley community is to be healthier and more vibrant. This will be accomplished by establishing and maintaining trusted relationships, having active public involvement, encouraging community engagement, and creating simple opportunities for development.

"Be the change you want to see in the world."
- GANDHI

PART 2
Why Wellbeing?

Definition
Wellbeing is a comprehensive measure that describes the satisfaction a person feels about their life. A person’s sense of wellbeing contributes to their overall perceived quality of life.

5 Parts of Wellbeing
The five parts of wellbeing as defined by the book ‘Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements of Living a Balanced, Happy Life’ by Joseph淋 and his colleagues are connected, social, financial, physical and community. These five elements are the factors that contribute to whether a person is considered to be thriving or suffering. Wellbeing is about the combination of our feelings for what we do each day, the quality of our relationships, the security of our finances, the vitality of our physical health, and the pride we take in what we have contributed to our communities. Most importantly, it’s about how these five elements interact.

How this all fits together
When working to improve the health and status of a community, focusing on wellbeing is a holistic approach. Quality of life is determined by more than physical health status; the concept of wellbeing accounts for the elements that contribute to living a meaningful life. By making a plan to address each of the five elements of wellbeing, a more comprehensive community improvement plan can be developed. Using a multi-faceted approach reaches more members of the community and meets multiple needs. Wellbeing offers a more complete method of community improvement that can create meaningful change for the entire community.
PART 3
Priority Areas

Community engagement and pride
Community programs and resources
Healthy foods
Safety
Recreation

Community engagement and pride

Community engagement is an important element to individual health and well-being. People who are more connected and engaged in what is going on in their community have a higher overall well-being and sense of control.

Getting involved and finding a bigger purpose that comes from being part of something greater. It results in an atmosphere of community pride and creates a sense of belonging to a community one which residents would firstly tell others about and invite others to visit—a community to which young residents would want to raise future generations.

The look and feel of a community play vital roles in creating a sense of pride among residents, as does relationships among neighbors, leaders, and non-residents. Committed, involved citizens make a community stronger and keep it moving forward.

In networking communities, pride plays an enormous role. Even through small activities and success, residents gain confidence in themselves and fellow residents and leaders. They gain respect for other people and their private property, as well as public areas.

Actionable community engagement & pride initiatives:
- Volunteer with a community organization
- Serve as a board or committee member
- Become involved in a religious congregation
- Organize a neighborhood clean-up effort
- Plan transportation fellowship events and celebrations
- Plan neighborhood recreational and sporting events
- Rehabilitate homes or add new homes
- Increase safety and crime watch ordinances

“I choose to live here, I don’t have to, but I want to. I want to make it so everyone wants to live here.”
AN INVOLVED COMMUNITY LEADER
Community programs and resources

When evaluating the importance of community wellbeing, a great amount of importance is given to having awareness of and access to resources. Non-profit organizations can provide some of the fundamental necessities to live a healthy life. In low-income communities, the need for support structures for accessing assistance is magnified.

Social services, health screenings, mental health awareness, and access to fresh foods are all known as catalysts for improved wellbeing. Once traditional health needs are met, there will be an increased ability to focus on personal and community wellbeing.

**Actionable programs & resources initiatives**

- Develop a resource center for everyday use.
- Organize a shift exchange.
- Coordinate support for accessing mental health assistance.
- Offer leadership and professional training opportunities.
- Develop mentoring connections.
- Connect with health resources in the broader community.
- Gain access to food banks and food assistance programs.
- Create a community newsletter.

Healthy foods

Proper nutrition is vital to healthy mental and physical development. Such development is hampered without the access and intake of adequate, varied, and nutritious foods. The average American doesn’t always make food choices with nutrition as the main goal. Instead, we reach for what tastes good, is quick and easy, and is affordable.

Access to nutritious foods is limited in some areas of the United States. Despite education and outreach throughout the country, some neighborhoods still lack access to fresh fruits and vegetables. This highlights the importance of increasing nutrition education and access to financial resources needed to make healthier choices.

**Actionable healthy foods initiatives**

- Teach nutrition basics to parents and children.
- Provide transportation home from school.
- Create a mobile farmers market.
- Focus healthy school lunches.
- Encourage healthy after-school snacks.
- Participate in community gardening.
- Install cooking surfaces in the parks.
- Offer family cooking demonstrations and nutrition classes.
Safety

The World Health Organization defines community safety as injury prevention, including violence, suicide, and natural disaster, whose action is led by the community.

Community Safety is a more positive way of conceptualizing crime prevention. While crime prevention is important, being able to shift a community’s focus from simply preventing crime to also creating a safe, secure community helps encourage community change.

When a community takes ownership of its residents’ safety, it creates a stronger community. Eliminating safety-related fear and establishing community safety with the concept of creating a safe environment while preventing crime is a powerful in making community involvement easier.

Actionable safety initiatives

- Organize community clean-up efforts
- Provide mental health awareness
- Increase safety and crime watch endeavors
- Ensure strong leadership in all areas
- Ensure adequate lighting of businesses and streets
- Develop procedures for reporting suspicious behaviors to authorities
- Develop engaging programs for all ages
- Teach drug awareness to all citizens
- Plant a garden or get involved in community gardening
- Use outdoor meeting places, such as parks and plazas
- Plant a family garden
- Start a boy’s and girl’s programs
- Blend with your family
- Build and run on the Greenway

Recreation

Leisure and recreation are sources of enjoyment that benefit people’s physical, emotional, social, and spiritual wellbeing. Regular physical activity leads to fewer health concerns, increased energy and improved self-esteem, and improved symptoms of chronic diseases.

Leisure and recreation balance work and rest, allowing people to connect with others. People often use leisure time to bond with friends and family members or to meet new friends and connect in the community.

Being engaged in an enjoyable activity and feeling connected to nature can contribute to our spiritual wellbeing, because leisure and recreation can provide people with a sense of autonomy and personal identity.

Actionable safety initiatives

- Organize a neighborhood fitness golf tournament
- Support a youth basketball tournament
- Develop a walking club and walking groups
- Spend family time outdoors
- Enjoy public gardens
- Plant a garden or get involved in community gardening
- Use outdoor meeting places, such as parks and plazas
- Plan a family game night
- Enroll in youth and adult programs
- Blend with your family
- Build and run on the Greenway
PART 4
A closer look at Whitely

Demographics

Delaware County faces a variety of public health issues. As a whole, the poverty rate in 2000 was listed at about 21%. Delaware County’s poverty level is 7% higher than Indiana’s, which is 11.9%.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2005 - 2009), the geographic boundaries of the Whitely community roughly border on postal code 46205. An estimated 1,200 housing units fall within the Whitely neighborhood. The Whitely community has nearly 3,200 residents. Of those residents, 26% are African Americans and 54% are white. Classified as below poverty level are 26% (31%) from two and 55% (59%) individuals. Within the Whitely community, 52% of the elementary school students receive either free or reduced price meals according to the State Department of Education.

PART 5
FOUNDATION

During spring semester of 2011, the Richter Institute partnered Whitely community residents as they worked to move Whitely toward becoming a vibrant, healthy community. As part of a Building Better Communities project, university students were immersed in this Whitely community, working with community leaders and residents to develop an action plan describing ways to enhance community well-being. After reviewing similar plans in other communities, the group held regular meetings, collected and analyzed data, and co-produced this document.

The Whitely community has many organizations and residents supporting community growth and development. Key partners include the Eddy Center, Motivate Our Minds (MOMs), Whitely Community Council, Ruffner Memorial Baptist, and a vibrant faith community.

In addition to this document, Whitely community members are working with Ball State’s Building Better Communities to develop an action plan. The action plan focuses on the city-wide Makers Action Plan (MAP). MAP is a strategic guide that expresses the vision and aspirations of the community. These are goals that are contributed to developing long-term plans and measurable action steps designed to realize the voice of a stronger, better Whitely. More information about Makers is available at http://www.makersindiana.com.
About The Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology

The John and January Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology at Ball State University offers interdisciplinary educational programs that give students the opportunity to find real-world solutions to wellness problems. Our faculty and student research focuses on multidisciplinary approaches to health and wellness for individuals, families, and communities and on innovative techniques for achieving higher levels of wellness throughout individuals’ lifespans.

About Building Better Communities

Building Better Communities Fellows is an immersive learning program in which faculty and students find real-world solutions to improve health in Indiana businesses, organizations, and communities. The fellow program engages interdisciplinary teams of students led by a faculty mentor in cut-and-try problem-based projects.

Jane Ellery

Jane Ellery is an Assistant Professor and the Associate Director of the Fisher Institute. She coordinates the Wellness Management Graduate Program, encouraging students to experiment with different ways to use technology in wellness management practice and helping them develop partnerships to ensure a healthier approach line with wellness initiatives and research practices.

Sarah Hayse Blakely

Sarah Blakely is a Wellness Management graduate assistant at the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology. Her undergraduate degree is in economics and finance with a minor in Sociology at Ball State University. Her interests include community health, the built environment, grant writing, and blogging.

Ryan Seehame

Ryan Seehame is a Graduate Assistant at the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology. His undergraduate degree is in business with a minor in Community Health and Wellness, Health, Nutrition, Management, and Nursing.

Anthony Derenzo

Anthony Derenzo is a Graduate Assistant for the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology. He received his undergraduate degree in Integrative Health Sciences from Stetson University in Altamonte, Florida. His areas of interest in health include alternative medicine, exercise, and community wellness.

Dawn Brand Ruhler

Dawn Brand Ruhler is a wellness management graduate assistant at the Fisher Institute. Her undergraduate degree is in journalism. She enjoys photography, travel, food and writing about health and wellness.

Joe Foskey

Joe Foskey is a wellness management graduate assistant for the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology. He studied exercise physiology at Ohio University. He enjoys personal training, exercise, and travel.

John Miller

John Miller is a family physician in New Castle, Indiana. He leads the county health office for New Castle County. He is a graduate student at the Fisher Institute for Wellness and Gerontology. His goal is to help coordinate community organizations to promote wellness and health at all levels. He enjoys spending time in nature and traveling with his family.
Building on Successes

- Honors Colloquium overview 10-15 minutes
Community Transformation

- The voice of Community Leaders (10 – 15 minutes)

- Mary and Cornelius, we can develop the information for here as we travel!
Discussion

Questions?
Questions for all Participants

- What suggestions or recommendations do you have that could help us continue our forward progress?
- What ideas did you hear that are currently also working in your community engaged practices?
- What have you heard that you think might be “scalable” to your community initiatives?
- As we move toward a common language, what are some of the terms that have worked best in your community work?
- What else do we want to know?