

## **Exploring Carroll County Carroll County United Community Forum Notes – June 17, 2010**

The goal of the June Forum to expand the circle of people vested in working together to make Carroll County a place where all generations can live, work and thrive was met thanks to the participants who attended. Among the 65 people who attended there was a mix of current team members, people who had attended a forum in the fall and people who were participating for the first time. It was a diverse group of citizens, elected officials, educators, parents, retirees and nonprofit employees.

Participants were briefly oriented to Carroll County United's community-centered approach focused on the community goal to make Carroll County a place where all generations can live, work and thrive.

The action teams each gave a brief presentation about the particular action areas the team chose to focus on and why they were selected, the data that informed their decisions. They also described their hypotheses about what positive changes they expect to see as a result and the first actions the teams decided to take in the next 30-90 days in order to start moving forward. Each team invited the community to join in and help them carry out those tasks and to then help decide the next steps.

The group then broke up by the five action teams for a more detailed discussion about the target areas and first actions. All of the groups spent some time in discussion with folks new to the effort and then circled back around to the selected target areas and actions and the steps people will take to begin to carry them out. There was a great deal of energy around getting started on the actions with many people stepping up and offering to help.

The process from this point forward is that the teams will continue to meet monthly, see what they learn as they carry out the first action steps and continue to chart a course of action toward achieving the target outcomes.

General discussion included wanting to see our youth more successful, diversifying area jobs and finding a way to have more economic stability for those working the seasonal and part-time jobs that are the backbone of the tourist economy.

### Action Team 1 – Early Childhood Readiness & Success

This team reported a lot of energy and vigorous discussion. Commitments were made by participants at this table to help gather information about the certified daycare centers and pre-schools, existing services that are already helping children be ready for Kindergarten and pediatric information. Education leadership committed to helping gather current data from their school districts. The group also proposed creating a data collection sheet to structure the process. The group learned that Manchester is undertaking a similar city-wide effort and would be a great resource to the group.

### Action Team 2 – Aligning Education to Careers

The group had representation from Wolfeboro, Conway, Tamworth and Moultonborough and was excited about the new faces at the table. Commitments were made by participants at the table to gather graduation data and where students plan to go after high school and to outreach to businesses to help ID how they define success. The team's action to track student success after high school will be a challenge, and the group invites additional help.

### Action Team 3 – Individual and Family Economic Stability

This group had the highest percentage of new people and spent more time in general discussion. The group committed to develop action items on livable wages including defining livable wages. They identified the need to find out if there are any legislative or policy barriers or supports and to go ask local businesses, "what might you need to expand? They will also reach out to Mt. Washington Valley Economic Council and Wentworth Economic Development Council to find out what they are already doing in regards to the buy local, livable wage, employee friendly business policies and workforce development action areas. There was general discussion that Carroll County needs to 'stop settling' and jump into larger systems.

### Action Team 4 – Balancing Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship

This breakout group had the largest attendance, diverse participants and a robust discussion. They had 9 people commit to working on the diversifying job portfolios actions, 3 commit to working on aligning regulations for shared resources, 8 to work on expanding broadband coverage and 5 to work on efficient use of resources. The group also wanted to support Team 3 with the buy local/promote local efforts.

General discussion about:

- Don't limit businesses coming to area but educate them/make them mindful about what is important to us.
- Pool seasonal workers – how to extend seasons for employee benefit?
- Group asked, "should we jump in on the 55% initiative (to retain 55% of college graduates) in order to encourage more young people to stay in our county?"
- Support/work with existing businesses all the way around.
- Discussions underway with local business about way to use their byproduct (steam) as a resource/input for another business.

### Action Team 5 – Health and Wellness

Members of the group committed to:

- checking in with local community health providers about what they can offer and whether they are able to handle an increase in patients.
- to gather/monitor national health care information to inform the team's direction.
- to work with Carroll County Transit on access actions that link with the new transportation services (clinical open house tour, communication with providers).

The group also noted that some people, particularly those at the most southern and most western tips of the county, are accessing services out of the county since those services are

more accessible to them (distance, etc.) The team noted they want to connect with the hospitals and VA clinic.

The overall evening was summarized by community coach/consultant Jay Connor. He said that this evening was about Carroll County putting a stake in the ground about the kind of future people want to create together. It is about declaring a willingness to work toward having a future that citizens determine rather than accepting the 'default' future. The more people get involved and own the future, the more true and real it will be.