



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
ROCK COUNTY

Positive Youth Development Community Asset Mapping Summer /Fall 2019

Context and Methods

Erin Conway

Community Youth

Development

Outreach Educator

608.757.5056

erin.conway@wisc.edu

Website:

<https://rock.extension.wisc.edu/>

Social Media:

<https://www.facebook.com/uwextrock/>

From May to September 2019, face to face interviews were conducted with 45 organizations. The purpose was to define and describe youth success and Rock County's effort to support this success through community and individual investment in the form of youth/family services and programming. Special interest was paid to the adult/organizational perception of Positive Youth Development (PYD), specifically Youth-Adult Partnership (Y-AP).

Individuals were selected to represent each major town/city in Rock County and also through stakeholder reference. A diverse set of stakeholders was interviewed based upon their work/initiatives as specific youth providers or programmers and/or broader community engagement roles. They included business owners, teachers, public and private elementary, secondary and postsecondary schools, coaches,

parents, healthcare providers including mental health, equity and diversity advocates, city government, faith based organizations, service organizations, and local police departments. Responses were confidential. However, a complete list of participants is included in the full page data analysis.

Resources

For further information regarding youth-adult partnership:

<https://extension.umn.edu/working-youth/what-youth-development>

<https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/youthadultpartnership/>

<https://health.oregonstate.edu/thriving-model>

Evaluation questions and corresponding interview questions:

1) *What is the current state of youth success and Rock County's effort to support this success through community and individual investment in the form of youth/family services and programming in Rock County?*

What does success in Rock County look like for youth?
(Success was undefined, but participants could refer-

ence a specific example of a 'successful youth'.)

What are the community assets for youth/youth development programming?

What are the greatest challenges/barriers youth face in Rock County?

What are forces or factors resisting innovation?

2) *What is the adult/organizational perception of Positive Youth Development, specifically Youth-Adult Partnership?*

Where are the gaps in youth development programming?

Do youth have a voice in your organization?

What strategies do you use to understand the youth population of Rock County?

Y-AP RC Snapshot 2019

Success looks like:

"Youth need positive role models. Someone to foster positive interaction when youth don't have that presence nor a place to go to. . . and opportunities to try something that only requires your interest and attendance."

"Opportunity. Access to services that exist. Youth have interests, but need access and adult support, people who are willing to take the time, follow through inside and outside the home."

Barriers are:

"Language. Driver's license. Money."

"Income. Transportation. Uneven leadership. Leadership demographic does not match the city demographic."

"Need to let the resources/needs direct program. Also, cooperation between resources. Need consolidation to get at the root of the problem."

Implications/Next Steps

The data analysis based on the community asset interviews is a synthesis of where individuals and organizations are thinking similarly and where they diverge. Some common themes are: 1) Rock County has a diverse range of programming that coincides with current initiatives of Extension Educators working in communities throughout Wisconsin, 2) Community stakeholders believe that youth success includes positive adult relationships and engagement through well-defined, authentic roles. This emphasis connects to the four Youth-Adult Partnership dimensions in the text box below, 3) Stakeholders expressed concern regarding the amount of youth voice that informed current programming and the need for the formalization of youth roles so that programming would be more easily adapted to the changes in youth needs/wants, 4) There is a disconnect between attitudes and practice around Youth-Adult Partnership. Furthermore, current cur-

riculums/practices are not intentional enough to bridge youth opportunities that result in empowerment in the greater community, and 5) Benchmarks to evaluate youth success outcomes remain ambiguous to a great extent which makes measurement and evaluation difficult.

Division of Extension programming historically focuses on civic engagement in its adult and youth programming in order to empower audiences on issues of concern for their own lives, local communities and the state as a whole. Youth programming as conducted within the Institute for Positive Youth Development utilizes the experiential learning model and Youth-Adult Partnership in order to Teach. Learn. Lead. Serve.

Community Youth Development, specifically, focuses on building youth and community capacity to support youth in leadership roles. Y-AP infusion in community organizations and programming formalizes youth voice and creates a feedback loop into the framework for ongoing program development, specifically conceptualizing the change and designing next steps.

Moreover, UW-Extension programming is committed to key practices developed by the Engaging Young People to Sustain Communities. These include empowering more diverse community leadership, increasing social capital, and strengthening engagement through building the seven Community Capitals: natural, human, social, political, cultural, financial and built capital. A community coaching framework created around an asset based and culturally relevant approach would also include educational theories such as “Funds of Knowledge”, “Cultural Capital” and “Communities of Practice” as a means to address community stakeholder analysis that the issue is not one of potential but instead one of access. These theories are discussed in the full report.

Ongoing CYD program development to both conceptualize the change and design/implement approaches could include a variety of cross programming collaboration, organizational change pilots based on Y-AP dimensions and Rock County conversations organized around Youth Program Quality Assessment Standards. These opportunities for partnership will inform strategies to enhance existing PYD programming and Y-AP in practice as well as create as needed both within organizations and across community coalitions.

Y-AP: Where we want to go

Authentic Decision-making—Youth are involved in meaningful decision-making

“Activities are most successful when youth discover their own messages, get beyond being a face in a room. They like to talk, to be asked about themselves, to tell their story.”

Natural Mentors—Adults intentionally support relationships with youth to help them develop

“Meet youth where they are at. Youth council is not just about youth showing up to adult spaces. Youth feel comfortable.”

Reciprocity—Youth and adults work together as partners

“Youth are on our programming board, youth reps in the church, intergenerational activities, neighborhood visits/involvement and visibility. These strategies are a work in progress. Need to be flexible around your goal/purpose. Even if you fail, fall forward.”

Community Connectedness—Youth are engaged in communities

“Benefits are youth building relationships with adults with trust, other community members involvement and opportunities for youth to be community voices. . . Students have also facilitated professional development for adults on diversity issues. We plan to repeat this training.”

An AA/EEO employer, the University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming including Title VI, Title IX and ADA requirements.

=====

Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service or activity. This document can be provided in an alternative format by calling (608) 757-5696 (voice) (711 for Wisconsin Relay).