A Strength-Based Approach to Community Assessment

A Pilot Project of the United Way of Cass County and the United Way of Porter County, Indiana, through a grant from the Indiana Association of United Ways

Pilot Project Report & Toolkit

March 2004

By Bliss Browne, Joyce Gebhardt and Sharon Kish
Table of Contents

Toolkit Narrative
  1. Executive Summary
  2. Detailed Narrative

Appendices

Cass County Documents
  1) Cass County Care Campaign 101
  2) CC Model Questions
  3) CC Interview
  4) CC Places for Interviews
  5) CC Facilitator Training Agenda
  6) CC Instructions for Facilitators
  7) CC Interview Responses
  8) CC Summit Participants Agenda

Porter County Documents
  1) News Release Imagine Porter County
  2) Imagine Porter County Talking Points
  3) IPC Questionnaire
  4) IPC Youth Questionnaire
  5) IPC Instructions for Facilitators
  6) IPC Participant Responses
  7) IPC Leadership Summit Handouts

State Leaders Conference Presentation
  1) Participant Exercise
  2) AI Pilot in Brief: Steps I-VII Outline
Executive Summary

The United Way, to be effective as a countywide organization, must be recognized as devoted to determining the common good (and supporting it.) In some communities, this has been done primarily through a needs based assessment process with existing agency beneficiaries and donors. A more effective way to do this may be through an AI type process which provides opportunities for all members of the community to express their interest in community priorities and how they can be accomplished. This interaction, with United Way acting as a community listening partner, can develop greater community ownership and participation. It also expands the role and positive reputation of the United Way.

In January 2003, the Indiana Association of United Ways initiated a Community Capacity Assessment pilot to see how using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) might reframe the traditional UW needs assessment to a more strength-based approach. IAUW provided grants for AI consulting support to two UW organizations - Porter County and Cass County –to create pilot projects to engage a broad cross section of the local communities in an appreciative interview process over a six-month period and to assess results.

Both pilots created a locally owned and designed process (led by a broad based design team with consultant coaching from outside) which implemented large scale interviewing and community forums focused on building relationships, expanding civic participation and gathering data. The strength and commitment of each design team was critical as was the ongoing commitment of United Way staff to take fullest advantage of the involvement of these volunteers. Their connections to local organizations (schools, businesses, etc) resulted in a helpful leveraging and connecting of local networks into a single large-scale process which produced strong interview protocols on affirmative topics of interest to the community, positive publicity about the campaigns, community gatherings in which topics of interest and importance were discussed, much data gathered and organized, and specific visions for moving forward.

Outcomes were consistent with some of the originally stated project goals, namely

- To become familiar with and model AI and its value as positive community organizing, communications and mobilizing tool
- To generate wider community involvement and partnership with the United Way,
- To generate topics and questions for community reflection with inspiring content,
- To build civic identity and commitment,
- To strengthen the infrastructure for volunteerism, including youth participation.

The most important impacts for the community included:

- Creating a new culture of public discourse that is appreciative and strength-based, which attracted interest and enthusiasm and built momentum
- Developing a stronger civic identity through constructive stories and visions
- Youth viewed differently in the community, as resources to civic processes
- Developing interest and capacity for looking ahead, taking a longer-range view.
The most important impacts for the United Way included:

- Challenging established roles and ways of working; creating positive communications culture and expanded self-understanding and public identity as more than a fundraiser
- Enhancing the positive reputation for UW as a listening and partnership organization
- Expanding volunteer engagement. New people signing up through this process.
- New approaches to research and data gathering. The data showed commonalities and patterns of caring and suggested potential new areas for allocations.

Exploring a possible alternative to traditional needs assessment implies the need for some reflection and deliberation on how the pilot results might change allocations. However, it was not in the scope of the pilot (or its funding stream) to continue to that extent. Having acquired high quality data, both pilot communities will explore this step in 2004 on their own. Communities interested in replicating the pilot for this purpose are encouraged to plan for this step from the beginning and consider what support might strengthen this effort to its completion.

We hope this toolkit encourages other communities to become familiar with AI and its value as a positive community organizing and mobilizing tool.

For questions, or requests for more information, contact Roger Frick or Lisa Hanger, Indiana Association of United Ways, 317-923-2377, roger.frick@iauw.org, lisa.hanger@iauw.org.
A Strength-Based Approach to Community Assessment

Introduction

There is a wide range of mental maps that get applied to assessing communities. In recent years, asset based community development and other strength-based approaches have been gaining favor. But most public discourse is still problem and deficit oriented with communities and agencies competing for funding on the basis of having the most needs. The United Way has been relied upon in many communities to do needs assessment, identifying gaps in service and prioritizing needs and perceived deficits. But there are limitations to this approach. Needs based assessment sees what the community is rather than what it can be. Framing community assessment in problem talk focuses on what communities don’t want and what doesn’t work. Community identity gets built around needs and needy people. To regenerate communities, and inspire volunteer investment of time and money, may require shifting focus instead to what communities value most, to what works and what matters instead of what’s wrong. How can those shifts happen in a way that improves health and human services and opens up possibilities (and energy) for community renewal and participation?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) may provide an answer. AI is an organizing methodology that selectively seeks to locate, highlight, and illuminate the life-giving forces of an organization or community. It seeks out the best of what is to ignite the collective imagination of what might be. Originally developed in the 1980’s as an effective approach to corporate organizational development by David Cooperrider and colleagues at Case Western Reserve University, AI is now in widespread use across many sectors, including community development. Extensive case studies documenting the practice and its outcomes can be found at appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu. An early and well known application of AI to community work is Imagine Chicago (IC), a project developed by Bliss Browne in 1992 to cultivate hope and creative civic engagement www.imaginechicago.org.

Discovery, Dialogue, Design: The Pilot

AI begins with discovery -- asking open-ended, asset-based and value-oriented questions about what is life-giving, what is working, what is generative, what is important. Positive questions around affirmative topics encourage sharing of best practices, articulation of fundamental values, and reveal the positive foundation on which greater possibilities can be built. Out of dialogue emerges expanded imagination about possibilities for action, which are then designed into concrete activities that lead to practical outcomes. The momentum of positive images and relationships encourage more people to contribute to bringing the desired visions to life.

In January 2003, the Indiana Association of United Ways (IaUW) initiated a Community Capacity Assessment pilot to see how using Appreciative Inquiry (AI) might reframe the traditional UW community needs assessment to a more strength-based approach. Needs assessment is often done as a survey focused primarily on existing donors and agency beneficiaries. This focus caters to the most vital existing partners, but limits the development of
potential new donors and partners and can under represent the broader community’s priorities. (As one person put it, “People in nice houses get asked about needs of nameless faceless people.”) The IaUW was interested in exploring how appreciative inquiry might shift community assessment to a more positive, community impact and solutions-focused process with greater community involvement and ownership. How might the UW create an information campaign to recognize and leverage community value and identify opportunities for community investment? How might issues and strategic investment opportunities be identified and linked to results rather than needs?

IaUW invited Indiana United Way organizations interested in designing and leading an AI community assessment pilot to apply for a technical assistance grant. The grant provided for consulting support from Bliss Browne of Imagine Chicago to serve as a strategic design partner, resource consultant on existing community building models, and trainer and facilitator for running a community summit. Many UW organizations expressed interest and two were selected – Porter County and Cass County --based on their commitment to provide the necessary leadership and support.

In February 2003, IaUW provided a 2-day training to interested United Way teams from across Indiana. It also introduced the AI methodology at the March 2003 Indiana State Leaders conference. From March-December 2003, the United Ways of Porter County and of Cass County developed AI protocols and engaged large segments of the local population in reflecting on community strengths and ways to build community capacity. Thousands of interviews were conducted, evaluated and summarized, with each process culminating in a community summit. The pilots developed new partnerships, provided important new models for civic conversation about community priorities, and enhanced the reputation of United Way as a community building organization. This toolkit describes the pilots and their outcomes. We hope it will be of value to other communities and United Way organizations interested in the application of AI to community assessment.

**Inside this toolkit you will find:**

- An overview of Appreciative Inquiry
- Two working models of applying AI in an assessment of community strengths including
  - Executive summaries
  - Interview protocols
  - Training and facilitation protocols
  - Talking points and presentation protocols
  - Agendas for community summits
- Lessons learned (process and content)
- Recommendations for interested communities
The Foundations Of Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry connects individuals and communities to what has meaning, value and purpose and builds positive relationships through positive communications. Three dimensions are especially noteworthy. First is the power of positive framing. Human beings of any age are full of potential, rich in strengths and talents, with energy and vitality to dream and create. Even complaints mask a deep desire for change. Reframing negative talk into positive values, hopes, and commitments provides a way out of traps and into possibilities.

Second, dialogue is invigorated by the power of inspiring questions. It is possible to investigate anything — unemployment and illiteracy or job creation and volunteer engagement, causes for despair or reservoirs of hope. The questions we ask set the agenda and determine what we find. Honest, open questions, asked in a spirit of genuine interest, enrich and deepen dialogue and open up new images and understandings. Finally, active listening is necessary and generative; something new happens in the "in-between" space that listening and dialogue create. When people listen deeply to one another, they honor each other and cultivate the trust and relationships so crucial for community.

Communities are human systems constructed out of the choices (including choices of language) their members make. Appreciative inquiry helps communities identify and name strengths, skills, hopes, values, assets and visions; a positive image and community identity grows which inspires higher participation and investment. Hope expands. Challenging communities to state affirmatively what they value, what they hope, what they want, enables them and their partners, to understand and act on behalf of their vision. People want and need to think constructively; appreciative questions around affirmative topics encourage open dialogue. People feel confident and energized to move into the future when encouraged to bring with them the best of the past, experience that is known and trusted, in areas that are of high value and impact.

New connections are created by sharing stories among community members not typically connected to one another (because of differences of age, race, culture or economic circumstances) A constructive experience of difference helps overcome isolation, suspicion and stereotyping. These uncommon partnerships often produce innovative outcomes since they help to shift perspectives. Constructive conversations and joint action among unlikely partners enlarge the possibilities for cooperative action and mutual accountability. Collectively owned visions of community futures (a united way forward) can only emerge out of open-ended, generative dialogue where every voice counts. Successful community building therefore requires pathways to participation that include everyone.

We can create only what we can imagine. To regenerate communities, communities need occasions and forums within which to articulate their own images of what they want and are willing to work for – forums where they can develop affirmative competence, creative agency and collective dreaming. Focusing on individual and collective preferred futures (goals worth aiming at) helps the focus on present abilities, skills and actions needed to get there. People will move toward a future they have imagined and created together, if there are structures that support personal investment and action on behalf of their visions.
United Way of Cass County C.A.R.E. CAMPAIGN
Executive Summary

Why we wanted to be an AI pilot.

In January 2003 Cass County stakeholders participated in Vision 2003, a process first begun in 1996 to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses and establish goals for our community. A community vision conference was carried out in 2000 to set direction for community planning on a broad spectrum. Of the ten critical components of community life that were identified, diversity was number one. Cass County has become more recognizably multicultural over the past six years with the highest percentage of Hispanic population growth in Indiana during the last decade, a rate of more than 1,400%.

Three of the goals of the visioning process were to form a diversity task force, complete cultural diversity training, and implement a community program. Over a period of one year, stakeholders worked to identify a champion for the diversity task force. It was decided that the champion should be someone that is a Cass County native who is in touch with all sectors of the community. Being known as a community building organization, United Way of Cass County (UWCC) became the logical choice. The UW Executive Director convinced the board that through her relationships with all sectors of the community, she could lead this charge with positive outcomes and that it was something the UW should embrace as part of its mission “…to care for one another…”

Appreciative inquiry seemed an ideal tool. The major assumption of appreciative inquiry is that in every community something works, that change can be managed through the identification of what works. The focus is on how to do more of what works. Focusing on what works as opposed to what problems the community is having differentiates AI from traditional problem solving approaches which look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and then work to find a solution; the traditional approach causes us to emphasize and even amplify problems. In contrast, AI looks at what works in a community, stirring up memories of energizing moments of success. This process creates a new energy that is positive and synergistic; the AI approach emphasizes aspirations. Once we appreciate and value the best of “what is,” we can envision “what might be,” dialogue “what should be,” and innovate “what will be.” This is the appreciative inquiry philosophy and the focus of the C.A.R.E. Campaign.

The Appreciative Community Capacity Assessment was a perfect next step for our community to complete its visioning process. We expected to greatly benefit from the constructive direction and make our visions become realities. Stakeholders had already made a commitment and were ready to move on this.
What did we hope to accomplish through the C.A.R.E. Campaign?

The goals of our campaign were as follows:

- To begin to understand how Cass County’s image can be one that is seen and felt as a community that cares.
- To develop ways to magnify Cass County’s impact through creative connections with other organizations and individuals that are vital to a healthy future for Cass County.
- To strengthen Cass County’s image as an inviting and reputable community to ensure that Cass County not only is, but also remains a community recognized for its positive accomplishments, opportunities, and hospitality.
- To increase and expand the unified participation within Cass County as a whole, connecting gifts and needs for mutual benefit.
- To ensure our Cass County community is one that “leads by example” in encouraging, and providing our youth opportunities to be active members.

United Way goals

- To measure at the community level, addressing the most pressing issues, and putting our resources against it.
- To engage the entire county, targeting neighborhoods and communities of people.
- To help align the Board and the campaign to be more strategic.
- To give the Board measures to use to revisit our mission and vision.
- To present a positive image for UW ED in everything she does. To practice AI at all times and thereby establish more meaningful relationships with children, friends, and colleagues.

Overall project design and timetable

The C.A.R.E. Campaign design team worked to develop an assessment tool that incorporates the use of Appreciative Inquiry, which reframes community assessment as a values-based community building process rather than a deficit-oriented data gathering campaign. This state-of-the-art process incorporates a more future-oriented, solutions-oriented focus with richer dialogue and ownership into the design. The C.A.R.E. Campaign was designed to draw attention to strengths upon which our community can build, the opportunities and community visions there are to realize, and energize and engage community ownership.

Our design team was fortunate in being able to work hand in hand with Bliss Browne, creator of Imagine Chicago (www.imaginechicago.org), throughout this process. Bliss assisted our team in goal refinement, evaluation strategies, and interview and focus protocols all in an effort to make this campaign as effective and successful as possible. Bliss returned to Cass County for our community summit which magnified and shared ideas gathered through our interviews with a larger audience, and brought the community together to deepen our community’s commitment to living out the process of appreciative inquiry and bringing our community together for the common good. The process sequence was as follows:
1. Planning Committee sets structure of process (Feb-March)
2. Board Meeting—introduce concept of AI and Community Assessment (March)
3. Select and Recruit Design Team (March-April)
4. Design Team meetings: (April-June)
   a) Decides topics
   b) Designs questions
   c) Determines format
   d) Decides target sites for broadest community engagement
   e) Assigns roles and responsibilities for implementation
5. Design team leads focus groups throughout the community (August-October)
6. Community Summit to create vision for future & develop action plans (November)
8. United Way follow through with and/or facilitate implementation of action plans – ongoing
9. Presentation of findings to State Leaders Conference March 2004

**Design Team Meetings**

A broad based design team was engaged to lead the process, with people selected on the basis of their likely interest and their willingness to engage constituencies with which they had connections and see that they could be a part of making something happen in the community. The design team was critical to the project’s success. It was important to get the right people on it. Interested United Way board members were crucial. Other community leaders were also critical so it became a community owned process. Regular meetings (monthly then weekly toward the end) were held. Team members took responsibility for identifying interview sites, leading interview processes, data collection, and publicity. The CARE Campaign was designed to reach a broad audience, with Design Team members key to reaching as many people as possible through the recruiting and training of other interviewers. The focus throughout was on giving many people a chance to talk and be heard.

Regular, unequivocally enthusiastic communication with the design team set a tone of active participation. Attention at each meeting was also put on publicity targeted at the broader community with the intent of reaching a wide audience. The intent of the promotions was to inform the community of the CARE Campaign (launch the campaign), to invite them to be interviewed or do interviewing, and to encourage and invite participation in the summit. Information about the C.A.R.E. Campaign and/or Appreciative Inquiry was also made available on the United Way of Cass County’s website at [www.unitedway.cqc.com](http://www.unitedway.cqc.com)

**Interview Findings**

During September and October of 2003, United Way of Cass County’s C.A.R.E. Campaign volunteers conducted nearly 2,000 individual interviews of various residents and workers in Cass County. Although the interviews were dialogues on life in Cass County and as such represented very personal subjective thoughts, the steering committee attempted to draw a number of
generalizations from the interviews as a whole. A representative 500 interviews were spread across age groups from teen to 65+ and included both Caucasian and Latino individuals.

General themes emerged from the interviews as important to the quality of life in Cass County and as reasons for moving here and living here. In rank order they are:

1. The importance and closeness of family ties;
2. The abundance and variety of activities for youth;
3. The general small town atmosphere and friends for support;
4. The quality of the school systems; the comfort level of having been born and raised here;
5. The desire to find a job here or work in this environment;
6. The feeling of safety and security perceived in this environment;
7. The overall friendliness of the people; and finally
8. The importance of church and church related activities on family life.

Also mentioned, but not as frequently, were the variety of community events, the importance of 4-H and YMCA programs for youth, and the quality of the parks for family recreation.

The six most frequently mentioned community advantages were consistent across all age levels, with the importance and closeness of family ties ranking number 1 overall and with each of the Caucasian subgroups. Number 1 for Latinos was the desire for more and better jobs. With that exception, overall responses for the top six were consistent, although priorities varied slightly. The quantity and variety of youth activities provided by the schools, 4-H, the “Y”, scouting, and church youth groups were cited over and over again as strength throughout the county. Personal and individual friendships also ranked high in determining the comfort level of respondents, and this combined with the small town atmosphere and the accompanying feelings of safety were ongoing themes throughout the interviews. Finally, the quality of the schools was mentioned repeatedly as an important factor by all age levels and was ranked second in importance by Hispanics.

The most frequently mentioned images by Caucasians were the fire at the Galveston Methodist Church and how it brought people together, farmers helping farmers in times of family crisis, the Cole Hardwood fire and how it brought people together, and finally, the Carousel as a positive family oriented community image. There were no consistent images named by Latino respondents, who have typically arrived in Cass County quite recently.

What areas of the community might be strengthened? The responses were fairly consistent and ranked in this order:

1. The need for additional activities for teenagers
2. Additional and varied attractions for all ages
3. More and better jobs, (top ranked by Latinos.)
4. Increased retail shopping opportunities and dine-in restaurants and
5. A greater emphasis on improving the aesthetics of the community.

Four other areas cited to strengthen the community are worth mentioning.
1. Welcoming events or organization to help newcomers become acclimated to the community.
2. A variety of avenues to help youth become involved in the community – volunteerism, community service projects, caring enough to give something back instead of always being a consumer.
3. Despite a general feeling of safety in the community, a need for better and/or more efficient law enforcement, and finally,
4. A desire to see efforts made to strengthen cultural connections and understanding (expressed by both Caucasian and Latino respondents.) Latinos also expressed a need for more and better daycare and the need for additional activities for young adults (those past their teen years).

**Community Collaboration Themes**

1. People coming together to help others. This was illustrated by various stories of people helping others in times of crises (this summer’s flooding, the Cole Hardwood and Galveston Methodist Church fires, deaths or serious illnesses in families, severe snow storms, etc)
2. People working to help the needy with food and clothing drives.
3. The community outpouring of support and patriotism following the 9/11 attacks
4. Times of joy and happiness that brought people together such as athletic championships, various volunteer projects, and the county fair.
5. Youth participation (especially the skate park.) Most of the youth participation was included in other areas with a strong emphasis on the importance of school sports and activities; church youth group activities, 4-H, YMCA, and scouting activities. These were all considered great strengths, but even so, a number of respondents seemed unaware of the many opportunities that are available, expressing the need for greater communication of the possibilities that are here.
6. From the Hispanic respondents there was an emphasis on the need for youth clubs, perhaps reflective of something present in their cultural experiences nor currently available in Cass County.

**Who should attend the Community Summit?** Individuals uniformly answered it would be more meaningful for them if their family and friends attended with them. This was consistent across all age levels and cultural groups.

**What would make the Community Summit worthwhile?**

1. The desire to make a difference and benefit the community
2. The expectation of seeing definite results was also important and was ranked number 1 by the two younger age categories and by Latinos.
3. Many also expressed the need to connect with others of similar interests and to explore the idea of community involvement. A few saw participation as a way to benefit themselves or their family, and still others simply thought it might be fun.
Community Summit

A community summit was held on November 15, having been rescheduled from September to accommodate the large numbers of people who had asked to participate in the interview process. The summit was designed to bring alive the stories and themes which had surfaced in the inquiry process, and to represent in multiple media what people had shared. The executive summary was discussed and visually represented in charts and graphs; positive images of Cass County were represented in student videos and art montages. The summit meeting room was surrounded by powerful quotations taken for the interview transcripts and maps of the county. The space deeply honored the scope of work that had been done, and the range of perspectives that had been brought to consciousness as a result. The range of participants was also noteworthy – young and old, Caucasian and Latino, curious mall walkers and dedicated service providers, in short, not just the usual suspects. The room was a hope map of what was possible and what had already been created.

Lessons Learned

• A project like this changes the perception of many in the community that the role of the United Way is to be just a fundraiser. This helped the community recognize United Way as a vital partner engaged in building community capacities.

• The process develops new relationships. New relationships with Faith-Based organizations were initiated through the involvement of the Catholic priest who served on the design team. The UW earned his respect as a community building organization and will be a point of contact in the faith-based community to help bring human service organizations and faith-based organizations together to improve the quality of life and overall wellness of the people of the community. This will be an especially strong relationship because the conclusions cited above of what makes our community strong all come down to the values that people have within them, their families, and their friends. Many times a potential donor will not give to the United Way because they give to their church. We have a lot of work to do to help the churches understand how we can help the community by working together.

• Many factors contributed to the pilot’s success. These included strong existing relationships; and the credibility and trust the community has for the United Way. The UWCC has developed initiatives over the past 5 years that have brought various community leaders and organizations together to assess and address issues. This project benefited from and extended that trust and reputation.

• It is too early in the process to determine how the pilot will change the application of resources. To date, this has not been discussed in regard to our traditional funding of member agencies. However, there has been discussion in regard to the possibility of offering stipends for start up funds to address identified issues. In addition, there will be discussion in regard to leveraging funds through grants and foundations with the use of the assessment.
• **Action needs to follow soon** since community expectations are currently high. We have inquired with the community and come to some conclusions through those inquiries of what the community wants; some ideas have been shared both through the interviews and the summit. The hope should be to strengthen the partner organizations, using the information to write grants, to solicit volunteers, to collaborate with other organizations.

**Why would we tell another United Way who wants to undertake this project?** That this process is effective:

- To inquire what the community wants and is
- To realize what the community wants and is
- To build new or strengthen current relationships
- To do community visioning
- To form collaborations
- To gather current information for use in writing grants, making grants, recruiting business, recruiting professionals
- To focus on the best things about your community, build on them, and emphasize and amplify them.
- To expand the identity of the United Way
- To identify new things to do and new ways to do them

You can do this!

This is time consuming and develops a mind of its own. Have to be aware of that and be flexible.

**How much time do we suggest for a complete and thorough process?**
About 10 hours a week would be a guide for the executive director or staff member in the Cass County experience. Allow approximately 5 hours a week for a volunteer. It takes all of 12 months from start to finish. Once the energy of the appreciative process and the community’s voice is unleashed, decisions will need to be made about how much time to invest.

**Final Thoughts**

- Don’t have expectations. If there are, then you will guide the process and influence the findings.

- Picking the right people from the beginning for the design team is important!

- You can catch more with honey than vinegar. Positive mindset and determination are important! Expect people to have a difficult time understanding the non-traditional ways of thinking!
• When people concentrate on the positive, it creates energy and a feeling you don’t get from needs analysis. And it gets new people involved.

IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY
Executive Summary

Project Goals

A. Generate wider community involvement, ownership and partnership with United Way of Porter County.

B. Build civic identity about and commitment to Porter County as a whole.

C. Enhance the communications practices of United Way of Porter County.

D. Strengthen the infrastructure for volunteerism in Porter County.

E. Identify common values and opportunities for community investment.

Implementation Timetable

January 2003 – UW board buy-in and application for funding to IaUW
February 2003 – Determine project scope and timetable with consultant
March, 2003—Select and recruit DESIGN TEAM; name project
   Our Design Team was comprised of twenty individuals, who represented all segments of the community: business, industry, media, government, judicial, education, retirees, nonprofits, workforce development, labor, community volunteers, our community foundation, and United Way Board and staff. We also had a social work intern from Valparaiso University as part of the team. We entitled the project Imagine Porter County.

April, May, June, 2003—PLANNING AND DESIGN
   The Design Team met every 2-3 weeks during the months of April to June. They developed interview protocols, selected topics, designed and tested questions, determined the interviewing format, and identified target groups. They decided that we would use a group format with a trained facilitator. We would approach existing groups and ask for time on their agenda to administer the IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY (IPC) questionnaire. While that would be the primary method of collecting data, we would also conduct individual interviews, mail surveys, and on-line website surveys.
   Our goal was to interview groups of all ages (from adolescents to seniors) and from all sectors (geographic, cultural, social, and economic). We added a demographic section to
the survey to track this information. A Spanish language version was developed as well as a questionnaire for youth.

July through November, 2003—**INTERVIEWING and data collation**

We sent out news releases about IPC, had a news feature about the project, and highlighted IPC on our website. We interviewed during the month of July through November, with the majority of the groups being facilitated in September and October. IPC was conducted with 28 groups, with approximately 500 participants.

September 26, 2003—**IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY COMMUNITY SUMMIT**

We held a community leadership summit on September 26, 2003, with about 65 people in attendance. At the summit we reviewed the information we had collected to date from IPC participants. We also had a presentation from youth leaders, who talked about their experience, and what they had learned from their involvement with IPC. Over 70% of the summit attendees gave the highest marks to the youth presentation on the evaluations.

We highlighted individual stories and developed a collective vision for the future. Finally, we asked the summit participants not only to envision their future hopes but also to explore what elements would be necessary to bring their ideas to life.

October, 2003—**REVIEW**

The Design Team met to review the evaluations and summary information from the summit. All the participants felt that IPC was a valuable process. The Team discussed their reactions to the entire IPC process.

January, 2004—**FINAL REPORT**

**Lessons Learned**

**Content**

♦ We learned that people truly care about their community and the families who live here. They value what Porter County has to offer. They want to preserve this heritage but also want to make Porter County an even better place for their children and grandchildren.

♦ Hopes for the Future are clustered around:

1. **Economic Development and Jobs**—This is not surprising in an area of high unemployment due to steel bankruptcies and downsizing.
2. **Activities which Strengthen Families**—These include intergenerational volunteer opportunities and recreational activities.
3. **Acceptance of Diversity**—In a county that is 96% white, more diversity and acceptance of diversity was the #3 hope for the future.
4. **Public Transportation and Affordable Housing**—areas to be developed.
Process
♦ IPC allowed for a variety of approaches to interviewing: groups, individual, mail, or online. The ideal situation is one that allows for conversation between two or more people, but all information learned was valuable.

♦ The process generates enthusiasm, and one group often leads to another, as people become excited about the process.

♦ People appreciate being asked to share their experiences.

♦ The process worked with every group, but no two groups were the same. The facilitators need to be flexible and creative. We also needed to adapt the questionnaire for youth and Spanish-speaking individuals.

♦ We needed more facilitators. We had trained several individuals who were free during the summer months, but the groups did not start gaining momentum until September. United Way staff and our intern did most of the facilitation.

♦ Timing is crucial. Interviewing should be done in the spring and early summer, not campaign time. There was not enough staff time to devote to contacting groups, and some people became confused and thought we wanted to do campaign presentations.

♦ IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY gave UW credibility as a “listening and open” organization.

♦ Look for “sparklers” for your team, those who are positive and enthusiastic and are strongly supportive of the project. They should also have the ability and inclination to spread the word about your project throughout the community. Some individuals had a hard time accepting appreciative inquiry as a valid assessment tool for United Way because it was not concrete enough. We lost some people along the way. A suggestion would be to have a smaller team in the planning stages and expand it during the implementation stage.

♦ Access to leadership was sometimes problematic. It was difficult to convince employers to free-up enough employee time to conduct the interviews.

♦ It is too soon to tell how or if IPC will affect the allocations process. The Planning Committee of the Board will be reviewing the results of IPC, as well as our previous needs assessment documents. The next likely step is the formation of Vision Councils, who will study the issues and topics raised by IPC and then make recommendations to the United Way of Porter County Board of Directors.

Final Thoughts

IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY is a civic conversation model, and the information learned forms a foundation for future planning processes. The next stage is to move beyond dialogue into action. United Way of Porter County will take a leadership role in this community-building
process, but it will take multiple partners to make the shared visions a reality. We believe that we have accomplished the following:

♦ We created a shared vision for the future of Porter County with inspiring content.
♦ We created a process for working together that expands our partnerships and deepens engagement.
♦ We modeled an appreciative and inclusive way of thinking that is open to possibilities and creates hope for the future.

Consultant’s Summary Observations

The United Way, to be effective as a countywide organization, must be recognized as devoted to determining the common good (and supporting it). In the two pilot communities, this has been done primarily through a needs based assessment process with existing agency beneficiaries and donors. A more effective way to do this may be through an AI type process which provides opportunities for all members of the community to express their interest in community priorities and how they can be accomplished. This interaction, with United Way acting as a community listening partner, develops greater community ownership and participation. It also expands the role and positive reputation of the United Way.

The AI pilot was originally envisioned as a method for exploring how appreciative inquiry might shift community assessment to a more positive, community impact and solutions-focused process with greater community involvement and ownership. How could the UW create an information campaign to recognize and leverage community value and identify opportunities for community investment? How might issues and strategic investment opportunities be identified and linked to results rather than needs? The question was never addressed about whether a community engagement process should be a replacement for needs assessment, supplant it, or influence a shift in its design. There was not sufficient time in the pilot to work through the implications of the pilot for redoing the allocations process. Those implications will not be determined until 2004.

Having said that, each pilot did a simply amazing job of engaging a broad cross section of the local community in an appreciative interview process in a very short period of time. One reason may be that AI is consistent with the United Way’s approach and skill in volunteer engagement. The United Way staff, and the design teams they recruited, were singularly committed to making the process work, and learning together how to do so, even though AI was a new and open-ended way of working. Many people worked really hard. Throughout, they modeled the practices and goals of the process – to recognize and leverage existing community assets, and identify opportunities for community investment and expanded volunteer engagement.

Somewhat different approaches were used by the two counties; the larger county (Porter) operated on more of a leadership-driven model with the community summit being a leadership...
summit. The smaller county (Cass) worked at more grass roots inclusive community visioning, conducting many more interviews with a much wider range of participants. Their summit was more story-based, less formal, consistent with the themes of providing hospitality to everyone.

**Success Factors**

That said, there were many common success factors including

- **Resources** in place that could be leveraged including
  - *Earlier community processes* which created a readiness for this process (for example, earlier vision activities in both PC and CC)
  - *A committed United Way staff and board*, who were energetic, experienced and highly skilled organizers and facilitators
  - *Local interns* interested in helping with the pilot
  - *The established credibility of the United Way* in each community
  - *High community goodwill* that could be organized
  - *Venues available for meetings and openness of the community* to participate in them
  - *Many committed volunteers* who stayed involved throughout a long process and brought their networks and skills to bear on the process
  - *Support from the IAUW* for technical assistance and basic training in AI
  - *An established community of practice* using Appreciative Inquiry in communities that could serve as a reference point for this process
  - *An experienced consultant* available throughout the process for mentoring
  - *An active interest and willingness, between the two pilot sites, to learn* from one another and share ideas and resources
  - *Time*, though there was not enough of it to do more than begin to discover how this approach might change the local culture of the United Way, its approach to allocations, and the civic conversation practices in the local community.

**Key Activities** made possible by the availability of these resources:

- a locally owned and designed process (led by a broad based design team with modest input from outside) which implemented
- large scale interviewing and community forums focused on building relationships, expanding civic participation and gathering data.

The **strength and commitment of each design team was critical** as was the ongoing commitment of United Way staff to take fullest advantage of the involvement of these volunteers. While the design teams struggled early on to know exactly what to do and how to do it, they each created a process that was constructive and grounded in what really mattered to local residents. They talked through and thought through how this new thing could work. They listened to one another. Different people took the lead at different stages. Their connections to local organizations (schools, businesses, etc) resulted in a helpful leveraging and connecting of local networks into a single large-scale process. Each UW created a much larger project scope than originally envisioned. In the case of Cass County, the demand to participate in the
interview process was so great from community members that the summit had to be pushed back two months to meet the demand.

**Outputs**

The **Outputs** were many:
- Strong interview protocols based on affirmative topics of interest to the community,
- Positive publicity about the campaigns,
- Many community gatherings in which topics of interest and importance were discussed,
- Community summits,
- Much data gathered and organized, in multiple media, about what matters to community members and ways the community could be strengthened, and
- Some specific visions for moving forward.
- Quite important was the creation of an enhanced and positive communications environment within which meetings and interviews were conducted, processes designed and outcomes discussed.

**Outcomes**

The **Outcomes were consistent with the originally stated project goals**, namely
- To become familiar with AI and its value as positive community organizing and mobilizing tool
- To model an appreciative and inclusive way of thinking and embed it in the hearts and minds and practices of community leaders and local citizens
- To generate wider community involvement and partnership with the United Way,
- To generate vital topics and questions for local communities with inspiring content
- To build civic identity and commitment,
- To enhance communications practices,
- To engage youth, and
- To strengthen the infrastructure for volunteerism.

It is too early to determine anything but short term **Impacts** but the following seem especially significant based on participant feedback:
- New way of talking in community that is appreciative and strength-based
- New and stronger civic identity developed through constructive stories and visions
- Youth being viewed differently in the community, as resources to civic processes

**Enhanced communication environment. New way to talk in public which attracted interest and enthusiasm and built momentum.**

- “People enjoyed participating. It was a positive connection to public life. Not push but inviting participation.”
- “We learned how to build on and leverage existing networks, especially with organizations that cross boundaries”
• “Every group we did lead to the next group. A gentleman on the allocation panel loved process; so he set up meeting with Kiwanis. The ED group led to client groups (e.g. Hebron center, Hilltop house with neighborhood assn)”

• Through dialogue, interesting cross connections were generated… for example, thinking of incorporating newcomers into the community by offering them ways to volunteer, shifting the focus on newcomers from clients for services to community resources seeking to belong and contribute

• “Having an outside moderator was helpful who was familiar with AI and UW. Eliminates baggage people carry with them in smaller communities. You need to have phone number of someone who understands the process, and who allows the community to struggle on its own terms”

Process built affirmative competence by inviting people to think about and share “positive things and what we have to offer.”

• “I learned more as a newcomer to community in last few months than I would have even more as guide. Have become a better ambassador. Lots of positives came down to people… people being ambassadors, with positive feelings for the community.

• People are now talking—developing positive competence; it starts changing how we tell the story of our time here, people’s outlook, commitment to family, youth, connects to voluntarism. The power of the summits was that they were around positive stories.

• “Now I think about ways to turn things around. How can we make it better?”

• “I’m using the approach at work. Employees are so much more receptive if you do things in a positive way! I’m saying thank you more.

• “Human beings have a tendency to focus on what they can’t do instead of what they can. Concentrating on what’s possible helps people focus on what’s next.”

The Process started an ongoing process of looking ahead, developed a longer range view.

• “If you give someone an apple, and they are only used to eating apples, they will eat the apple. We need to look at an apple and see the seeds for growing an orchard...we’re not used to looking ahead.”

• We have a whole new set of questions….Whole process was about asking questions. One leads to another. Not just how are you questions. More than just an exercise..

• “Envisioning is a hard and important process; we’re more used to being implementers”

Involving young people as leaders was important… gave community vision of them as current resources not just beneficiaries of services. Interns were essential to staffing. Students got enthusiastically involved in producing videos, doing interviews, making summit presentations. They shone and gave a glimpse of how much more their involvement could make possible.

• “Students got wound up in the process. This created opportunity for straightforward communication in family that didn’t always happen. The United Way worked beyond the minimum requirements that were set out. Interviewing went further than it needed to. It created dialogue.”
For United Way

- UW Board understands that we’re more than fundraisers; we are community.
- Challenges us to rethink our role and ways of working. High point experience people cited were usually hands on—UW doesn’t do “hands-on”. How can it? Can we develop high touch process?
- Learned to build listening into more processes. New model for public dialogue.
- Expanded identity for UW and credible one.
- Campaign had been going down year after year. Now UW looked on as good thing.
- Can make a difference to doing new things we haven’t done, change allocations. Helped us identify what some of those things might be.
- New people signing up through this process. Not only the usual suspects. Highlighted expanded connections needed (e.g. tie-in to schools for UW (including commercials)
- We need to concentrate on positives. Meeting and process works better.
- Shows new approaches to research and data gathering. Stories take time. UW is deficit data driven culture. Struggle was valuable. Data showed commonalities and patterns. Data showed stories that had authority in the collective imagination. Data organization honored voices of people involved. Consistency of data was extraordinary. Identified patterns of caring.
- Highlighted impact areas important to the PC community —economic development (job growth), welcome and involves people (volunteer), affordable housing, youth, etc…these will get more consideration now. We can form groups around core issues—vision councils that can look at funding patterns, set affirmative topics for visioning that can lead to action

Challenges - how process could be strengthened

- **People have to experience it!!** When people didn’t have time to experience the process, it was harder for them to understand. The approach initially was hard to grasp—default mode is ‘here is the problem, let’s solve it. The pilots lost people along the way who didn’t have confidence this was ‘hard’ enough, and could lead to concrete outcomes. “Sitting around talking is waste of time”. “Found out how negative and problem oriented we are”. It was necessary to be vigilant in calling people back, deal with how to keep on positive track. Caring spirit and attitude and respect carry this process forward.

- It was a (worthwhile) struggle to design appreciative questions…a new way of thinking, an art that required practice. Parts of interview format termed out to be redundant. Asked too many things from too many directions instead of a few. **With more time, a pilot within the pilot to fine tune the questions might have been helpful.**

- **People need encouragement to tell a STORY.** People not used to telling their stories. They are self-discounting. Short term interview hard to come up with story. Many people didn’t have one. Maybe should have trained interviewers to probe

- Existing processes like allocations not tied in to this pilot strategically so running in parallel universes. There is consensus that this is much broader process than old needs assessment, and much more engaging. But there was **no easy way to incorporate this**
into established UW processes – board meetings, allocations committee, existing program areas (many of which are problem focused). Pointed out the need to institutionalize this process across all areas.

- We discovered a built in tension between data-drivenness and relationship building. (Was AI a positive survey to get info or conversation to create connection?) In-person interviews were most effective but took most time. The debriefing process of interviews should probably have been more formalized so it was clear we were gathering stories not just data. Stories lost their narrative depth and got distilled into data. It would have benefited from a better-established system for debriefing and collating information.

- Time was a serious constraint. Interviews often required more time than people had available. Longer-term process needed to imbed this is a way that could move from dialogue to action planning and action. Limits on staff and board time precluded doing both a full-blown community assessment and the community-building pilot in 2003. Scheduling limitations often meant UW staff needed to facilitate process. This was good for Sharon and UWPC (though demanding) because it strengthened personal connections. There is a need to reflect on ways to expand facilitation pool available on design team and beyond and what the ideal timeframe is for this process. It should have been scheduled at a time other than campaign time. The amount of time involved is similar to a well-developed needs assessment. Give serious consideration to the type of consultant support needed if you have limited staff time to devote to the project. Do you need someone to prepare agendas and lead meetings? Do you need someone to train facilitators and write up notes?

- Building a broad participation base required attention to language issues; the questionnaire was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, youth-friendly language.

- Participants came to appreciate that AI is a Mindset, a way of life, not just a methodology – it can be applied everywhere, takes practice, and is counter cultural.

Recommendations

We hope this toolkit encourages other communities to become familiar with AI and its value as positive community organizing and mobilizing tool.

Here are a few questions to consider as you begin your own process:

- Why are we doing this? What do we hope to accomplish?
- Why do we see AI as a valuable tool for accomplishing our objectives?
- Who are the right people to involve? Who is on the bus? In what seat? Where is the bus going?

Selection of Design Team

- Who should be on design team? Think broadly.
What connections do the design team members bring into the process – and what do they want/plan to contribute to making it work?

What should it be constituted to accomplish by way of tasks? – for example
  - deciding topics and questions,
  - deciding rollout of the process, including who is involved and where
  - planning summit,
  - conducting focus groups

What is the **Framework** within which the design team needs to work?
What elements of the process are “fixed”, what do you want to create and why and what might make it work? (Fundamental frame components probably include
  1) **Content**: e.g. Reframing community assessment and expanding community participation;
  2) **Process**: Using Appreciative Inquiry as a tool;
  3) **Timetable**: By (date) to have completed design, implementation, summit meeting, and preliminary evaluation of pilot

**Process design**
- What do you want to understand about your community and why?
- What questions, ways of working would encourage everyone’s participation? What language and other cultural inclusion issues do you need to keep in mind?
- How will you make the process visible to the broader community?
- What resources will help you do your job? Who has the resources?
- What’s in it for community?
- What it’s going to cost?
- How much time will it take?
- What staffing and outside facilitation or other support do you need to move forward?
- How will you organize and use the information you get back to make decisions and move forward?
Appendices
United Way of Cass County

C.A.R.E. Campaign

What is the C.A.R.E. Campaign?
The United Way of Cass County was selected by the Indiana Association of United Ways to pilot an Appreciative Community Capacity Assessment Toolkit for use by other United Ways. As a result of this opportunity, the C.A.R.E. Campaign design team has been working to develop an assessment tool that incorporates the use of the Appreciative Inquiry process, which reframes community assessment as a values-based community building process rather than a deficit-oriented data gathering campaign. This is a state-of-the-art process that incorporates a more future-oriented, solutions-oriented focus with richer dialogue and ownership into the design. The C.A.R.E. Campaign draws attention to strengths upon which our community can build, the opportunities and community visions there are to realize, and looks to energize and engage community ownership.

Our design team has been fortunate in being able to work hand in hand with Bliss Browne, creator of Imagine Chicago (www.imaginechicago.org), throughout this process. Bliss has assisted our community’s team in goal refinement, evaluation strategies, and interview and focus protocols all in an effort to make this campaign as effective and successful as possible. In addition, Bliss will return to Cass County Saturday, September 27, 2003 for our community summit which will not only magnify and share ideas gathered through our interviews with a larger audience, but also bring the community together to deepen our community’s commitment to living out the process of appreciative inquiry and bring our community together for the common good.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?
The major assumption of appreciative inquiry is that in every community something works, that change can be managed through the identification of what works. The focus then is on how to do more of what works. Focusing on what works as opposed to what problems the community is having differentiates AI from traditional problem solving approaches which look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and then work to find a solution; the traditional approach causes us to emphasize and even amplify problems. In contrast, AI looks at what works in a community, stirring up memories of energizing moments of success. This process creates a new energy that is positive and synergistic; the AI approach emphasizes aspirations. Once we appreciate and value the best of “what is,” we can envision “what might be,” dialogue “what should be,” and innovate “what will be.” This is the appreciative inquiry philosophy and the focus of the C.A.R.E. Campaign.

What do we hope to accomplish through the C.A.R.E. Campaign?
The goals of our campaign are as follows:

- To begin to understand how Cass County’s image can be one that is seen and felt as a community that cares.
- To develop ways to magnify Cass County’s impact through creative connections with other organizations and individuals you see as vital to a healthy future for Cass County.
- To strengthen Cass County’s image as an inviting and reputable community to ensure Cass County not only is, but also remains a community recognized for its positive accomplishments, opportunities, and hospitality.
- To increase and expand the unified participation within Cass County as a whole, connecting gifts and needs for mutual benefit.
- To ensure our Cass County community is on that “leads by example” in not only encouraging, but also providing our youth opportunities to be active members.

For more information about the C.A.R.E. Campaign and/or Appreciative Inquiry, visit the United Way of Cass County’s website at www.unitedway.cqc.com!
**Overall Topic: Creating a Community that CARES**

**Affirmative Topic: Strengthening Cass County’s Image**

**Goal:** To strengthen Cass County’s image as an inviting and reputable community; to ensure Cass County not only is, but also remains a community recognized for its positive accomplishments, opportunities, and hospitality.

**Question:** What do you feel are key factors that make a) you as an individual, b) businesses, and c) the community as a whole proud to be a part of Cass County?

**Affirmative Topic: Increasing Community Collaboration in Cass County**

**Goal:** To increase and expand the unified participation within Cass County as a whole, connecting gifts and needs for mutual benefit.

**Question:** Describe a time the citizens of Cass County came together as a community. What made this a meaningful and memorable event/experience?

**Affirmative Topic: Engaging and Expanding Cass County’s Youth Participation**

**Goal:** To ensure our Cass County community is one that “leads by example” in not only encouraging, but also providing our youth opportunities to be active members in our society; to provide an atmosphere that highlights, through youth participation, the positive aspects of Cass County and its future possibilities, resulting in youth wanting to stay or return to our community.

**Questions:** What makes Cass County conducive for youth participation?
What opportunities for youth involvement do you value most in our community?
Please interview at least one person by reading the lead-in paragraph, then asking the questions. Please take notes so you can share the responses. The responses to these questions will help our design team prepare for our community summit and build on the strengths in our community.

We live in a time of remarkable change and opportunity, a time for rethinking relationships among groups, organizations, and communities of all kinds. We’ve seen historic changes around the globe...increasing democratization; rapid spread of global communications, breakthrough in health. At the same time, we’ve seen changes, breakthroughs, and opportunities in our own community of Cass County...recovery from devastating fires, beautification of parks and buildings, introduction to new cultures, awesome volunteer spirit, tremendous fundraisers, historical preservation, educational and athletic team victories, and caring faith-based communities. These and other changes and victories signal an open moment in world and Cass County community history—a time for great hope.

Strengthening Cass County’s Image

*Goal:* To strengthen Cass County’s image and identity as a community of positive accomplishments, opportunities, and hospitality.

*Cass County has a reputation as a friendly community, where people choose to live.*

*Questions:* To start, I’d like to learn a little bit about you and why you are here.

What first drew you (or your family) to live or work in Cass County?

What or who has contributed most to making you feel welcome here?

What have been the best things about living here?

What changes would make Cass County an even more welcoming place for newcomers?
Increasing Community Collaboration in Cass County

Goal: To document and expand ways in which community connections have strengthened Cass County as a whole, connecting local gifts and needs for mutual benefit.

Many community connections make Cass County strong, connecting local gifts and needs for mutual benefit.

Question: Describe a time the citizens of Cass County came together as a community…to show their care for someone or something that really mattered to you.

What made this a meaningful and memorable experience for you?

What did the community coming together make possible?

What community connections in Cass County do you wish could be strengthened in order to make this an even better place for everyone who lives here?

Expanding Cass County’s Youth Participation

Goal: To ensure Cass County “leads by example” in encouraging, valuing, and providing opportunities for young people’s contribution to Cass County as a community that cares. To showcase, through youth participation, the positive aspects of Cass County and its future possibilities, resulting in youth wanting to stay or return to our community.

A community that works for young people works for everyone.

Questions: What makes Cass County a good place for young people?

What opportunities for youth involvement do you value most in our community?

What ideas do you have for increasing young people’s participation in the life of this community?

Moving Forward Together in Hope

Goal: To raise interest and participation in a collective visioning process that will expand identity and action on behalf of Cass County as a community that cares. To expand the number and range of people who have a vital interest in, influence on and stake in the future of Cass County.
A vital future for Cass County requires everyone’s participation. We are planning a day long Community Summit in September of this year to bring together many people who have a vital interest in the future of Cass County and are willing to work on behalf of making it a positive one.

Questions:
How might participating in such a collective visioning process in Cass County influence the direction and interest of your own community involvement?

What would make it worthwhile for you to participate in such a process?

Who specifically would you most want to participate with you?

Mark your calendar!
Join us Saturday, September 27, 2003 at our community summit!
THANK YOU!

NAME OF INTERVIEWER______________________________________________________
NAME OF INTERVIEWEE_______________________________________________________
YEARS OF RESIDENCY IN CASS COUNTY  0-4  5-9  10-14  15-24  25-34  35-49  50 +
WITH WHAT CULTURAL HERITAGE DO YOU MOST ASSOCIATE?_________________
DATE____________________________________________________________________

For more information about the C.A.R.E. Campaign and/or Appreciative Inquiry, visit the United Way of Cass County’s website at www.unitedway.cqc.org!
United Way of Cass County
C.A.R.E. CAMPAIGN
Facilitator Training Agenda

I. Introductions & What is the C.A.R.E. Campaign?  
   A. Intro self - Name, how long been in Cass County, from where?  
   B. What is C.A.R.E. Campaign (Use Campaign 101 Green Sheet)

II. What is Appreciative Inquiry?  
   A. Tell personal experience with it  
   B. Use Campaign 101 Green Sheet

III. What do we hope to accomplish through the C.A.R.E. Campaign?  
   A. Use Campaign 101 Green Sheet  
   B. Add your own experience and hopes

IV. Interviewing
   A. This will be based on the time allowed  
   B. Do intro to interviewing with one question (10 min. each) (20 min.)  
      or entire interview (30 min. each) (60 min.)

V. Debrief of Interviews
   A. Who wants to share a story you heard from your partner that moved you?  
   B. How did it feel to interview...be interviewed?

VI. Instructions for Facilitators
   A. Use Green Sheet, back side  
   B. Answer questions
OVERALL: Our purpose is to stimulate conversation while collecting opinion. Your role is to encourage participation and provide a structure. You will primarily listen and record the general themes that come from the group’s discussion. You may have one group or multiple groups.

BEFORE BEGINNING: Assign or divide your audience into groups of 4-8 individuals. Ask them to sit in a circular arrangement so that each person can see the others. It is good to mix the people in each group so they do not necessarily know each other. Attempt to have even numbers in each group. Give each participant a copy of the questions. If you have one group, you are the listener and recorder of the group’s answers. If you have multiple groups, assign one member of each group to be the recorder and give that person an extra blank sheet.

OPENING COMMENTS: Welcome each person. Explain the purpose and the process. Encourage each participant to write on the pages since we will collect them at the end of the time. There will be a one-hour time limit on this meeting. Stay on time.

State our ground rules:

- Everyone will have an opportunity to share.
- Listen to what others say.
- Please share your thoughts; they may stimulate someone else’s.
- Respect the comments of others. Each person’s comments are their personal beliefs, feelings, and perceptions. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.
- All comments are encouraged. Please try to avoid attacking, criticizing, or debating each other.
- Remember, this is a process of POSITIVE inquiry.

PART I INSTRUCTION: (20 minutes—10 minutes of interviewing and 10 minutes sharing)
Read the opening paragraph below to set the stage for the questions. This section is to begin to put people at ease and create comfort for them to share more openly. Ask people to pair off within their groups and share their thoughts about Strengthening Cass County’s Image. If you have an odd number in the group, ask three people to work together. Ask each pair to share their partner’s answers with the entire group as a form of introduction.

We live in a time of remarkable change and opportunity, a time for rethinking relationships among groups, organizations, and communities of all kinds. We’ve seen historic changes around the globe…increasing democratization; rapid spread of global communications, breakthrough in health. At the same time, we’ve seen changes, breakthroughs, and opportunities in our own community of Cass County…recovery from devastating fires, beautification of parks and buildings, introduction to new cultures, awesome volunteer spirit, tremendous fundraisers, historical preservation, educational and athletic team victories, and caring faith-based communities. These and other changes and victories signal an open moment in world and Cass County community history—a time for great hope.

PART II INSTRUCTIONS: (30 minutes—15 minutes interviewing and 15 minutes sharing)
Continue the same format in discussing Increasing Community Collaboration in Cass County and Expanding Cass County’s Youth Participation. Ask the group to share their answers and look for common themes. Help the group identify commonalities.

PART III INSTRUCTIONS: (10 minutes) Ask each participant to share ideas with their partners on the topic of Moving Forward Together in Hope. Ask each person to share their answers and look for common themes. The facilitator or the assigned group recorder should record the commonalities.

Debrief by once again drawing out the commonalities of the interviews. Discuss the potential of focusing on the positive aspects of our community and invite the group to conduct additional interviews and/or attend the C.A.R.E. Campaign community summit on Saturday, September 27, 2003. For additional information about the C.A.R.E. Campaign and/or Appreciative Inquiry, visit the United Way of Cass County’s website at [www.unitedway.cqc.com](http://www.unitedway.cqc.com)!
Interview Responses

1. WHAT, FOR YOU, HAS BEEN A HIGH POINT OF YOUR LIFE IN CASS COUNTY, A TIME YOU HAVE BEEN PART OF REMARKABLE COMMUNITY CARE?
   - Working on keeping Tower Park pool open. Mayor’s Task Force formed to solve this.
   - Community came together to get the Carousel restored. Community did this twice.
   - Helping people & fundraisers when President of Kiwanis.
   - Helping United Way.
   - My oldest son started hanging with a tough crowd and began to slip at school and at home. My wife and I could not seem to get his attention, so we asked the sheriff and the fudge to help him recognize where he was headed. They willingly came to our aid without question or hesitation and praised all of us for taking action before it was too late.
   - I moved here last Sept. from California and have never looked back. I’ve been involved in several community programs and activities since I’ve been here and have been so inspired by the way everyone has welcomed me and helped me to become a part of Cass County and Logansport. One time a storeowner let me take home an end table before buying it, just to see if it would match my other furniture. This kind of trust would not happen in other larger communities.
   - During the anniversary of 9/11 WHZR had a fundraiser for defibrillators for our first response vehicle. The community came together—the response was terrific.
   - Helping underprivileged people, serving on CC Health Center board, United Way, and church. I’m limited physically and with education, but these are things I can be a part of and help with.
   - Winning the Jewel Award in 1998 for IHSA for outstanding media.
   - Light up Logansport, the first year of 2001. It was amazing with the response and excitement. It was post 9/11 and the community spirit was great. Also, the memorial help at Little Turtle post 9/11.
   - During tough times, positive change can happen
   - Helping my grandparents, caring for them because they are old.
   - Involvement with church. Helping people in church work through unexpected problems/times of crisis…fires, illness, etc.
   - United Way Circus last year because it was a diverse group of people. Reaching the goal to bring people together that didn’t feel obligated to be there.
   - Renaissance of Y, the building was “staggering,” it has gotten better and better for kids and seniors programs
   - Worked for Career Resources as part of a summer youth program, employability, schools, economically challenged group. Kids learned job skills while assisting __??__ dept.
Logan’s Landing Streetscape project, likes being a part of an organization with the focus being mainly on improving our downtown.

Livelihood derived from Cass County. Working with Ag. Community. Ministry through church, working with volunteer fire department and law enforcement, 4H Club.

Involvement with Head Start and Area Five which led to a total directional change in career path. It’s been a miracle to work at this agency. Loves being involved with the children and the parents, although the parents are the real challenges in her job. Has experienced the tremendous generosity of Cass County in this position. People not only donate their money but also their time and talents.

The Parish picnic last Sept; mix of different groups/families/kids…above & beyond their differences.

When Lewis Cass won State Championship, pep sessions and fans lining the roads.

Winning State Championship.

Walking safely at night-no violence like in California; have received support and lots of help. Were going to get deported and when INS arrived, the Americans who worked with them prevented this because the INS didn’t have proper orders. Tranquilo.

When Scott Altman (Space Shuttle Astronaut) came for the United Way campaign. It involved many organizations, companies. Provided opportunity to update technology connections in schools. Energized lots of volunteering. Created a lot of focus on city and goodwill. This system is still a resource.

Collecting for St. Joe Clinic through the churches-Catholic Churches-community trying to save a part of it by saving Chapel. Fund drive for Carousel through the whole community-raised more money than needed, surprised me-successful because it belonged to Logansport, people themselves and their kids had used it-to me it was grabbing the brass ring.
Interview Responses

2. WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT . . .
   (A) YOURSELF AS A CITIZEN OF CASS COUNTY?
   - Can be involved in a lot of the community events because it’s small
   - The freedom to be involved in projects to make life better in CC.
   - Feel like a part of the community through volunteering
   - I’m an onward volunteer fire fighter and I value the way people help each other in community service.
   - Being a part of the whole community, inside and outside of Logansport. I work in the city and live in the country, so I am able to enjoy it all
   - Working at the radio station, she has the opportunity to help people and make a difference.
   - “My roots” It is very meaningful to move back to my birthplace and fit in and enjoy the area and its history. “It’s God’s place for me.”
   - Being a part of community…being valued.
   - Being heard no matter who I am, my voice counts
   - Input is welcome, processes are open. If I want to participate, made to feel welcome.
   - I don’t vandalize, I take pride where I live.
   - Taking personal ownership of CC community
   - Being a native, being a navigator for positive change
   - Not closed little cliques, always welcome to pitch in.
   - Your objective about things, likes to get full story
   - Pay my taxes and I vote
   - The organizations that she’s involved with and the projects that she’s directly involved in and their accomplishments. The organizations include Little Turtle, Logan’s Landing Economic Restructuring Committee and Make a Difference Day.
   - Tax Payer
   - It’s my hometown; it’s where I grew up. “I’ve always loved it.” She’s grateful she can make a decent living so she can stay here. She likes the small town between two rivers.
   - Opportunity to be a bridge between the two communities (Anglos/Latinos)
   - Family & friend connections; smaller community
   - Opportunity to form great friendship
   - The contributions I’ve made in bettering people’s lives-scouting
   - Preserving what we have. The first day I moved, I said, “This is where I want to live.” People were real friendly atmosphere exists.

   (B) YOUR WORK?
   - Help people-Close knit-Helping kids (Helping kids learn to swim)
   - Good place to work, people are family
   - Being a part of growth and expansion-increased employment over 100% in last 10 years
   - Coming home from Kokomo to CC
   - Serving Jesus Christ and his people. I love being a pastor!
   - The people. It nice to work in a community and know people really care.
   - Keeps mind alert, body active-When you do those things you grow and develop and learn.
Keeping him in contact with the community and business leaders.
My organization is a recipient of others’ time and resources, when something needs done they take care of it. Making positive changes
My actions do have an impact on people that are somewhat defenseless
I don’t work (High School Student)
Ability to grow in job with increased responsibilities
Meeting social needs of people through communication abilities
Organize work can see reason for doing it
That it is self-satisfying, couldn’t do anything if she didn’t like it, likes helping people
Retired now. Was able to talk a lot of kids into joining the Military
The ability to make a positive impact on our community through small business development. Personal relationships
Creating good paying jobs. Low employee turnover
She has had the opportunity to talk with many other Head Start directors throughout Indiana and she’s found that their agencies don’t have the vision that Mike Meagher has. He makes it easy to provide Head Start program and expand as needed
There’s a lot of variety – age, ethnicity/being a part of important part of people’s lives.
College Student (Coaching) Able to be in a position to help students to become better athletes and people
High School Student – Inserted “Education” for “Work” Opportunity to prepare for college
They treat me well
Help people with their finances to feel better about themselves

(C) CASS COUNTY AS A COMMUNITY?
The ability for people to work in groups to get things accomplished for the betterment.
Good family atmosphere to raise a family. Community pulls together when there’s a need.
How they come together during times of crisis-fire-illness-helping
The country life, the simplicity, the ease of moving around and living outside of Logansport, but being close to it.
The friendliness and the freedom
The atmosphere…She feels that with all the new changes, CC is really a great place to live
Beauty of the area is awesome-Rivers, woods, farmland. “Near and dear to my heart”
Churches & families working together
Civic pride, responsibility, and participation. I don’t see division.
The people, they make things happen, interested in change for the good and a great place to live.
People always help each other. People are friendly
The fact that the community is family oriented. The school system
Being able to go places and be familiar with people makes her feel safe and a part of community. Value her responsibility of being a part of the community.
Lots of community minded people who contribute without concern for personal gain, CCCF for example.
Fairly Small
- It’s a good place to live. Great place to raise good kids.
- It’s where I was born and raised. Personal relationships that have been formed here
- Great schools. Great place to raise family
- “The talented people that take the initiative lead the rest of us.” The Streetscape Project. Little Turtle Waterway. Historic Preservation.
- Diversity/size-big enough to do some things small enough to reach a lot of people
- Size allows for closer relationships which allows for a greater sense of family, support
- Bonds; knowing families, feeling of belonging
- We have a new life here
- Family attitudes and family love is exhibited in different church groups, different ethnic groups
Interview Responses

3. WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE CORE FACTORS THAT GIVE “LIFE” TO OUR CASS COUNTY COMMUNITY, THAT MAKE IT A SPECIAL PLACE TO LIVE?

- People & Independent Businesses. Churches-strong faith in God. Caring
- Schools-Church-Non-profit organizations
- People here do not see themselves as anything other than people here that are willing to help other people here.
- It’s small, it’s close, it’s easy to get around in, it’s friendly, it’s safe, people seem to trust one another and give to one another.
- The continuous improvement to our streets, parks and the city as a whole. People in CC really care and want to make a difference.
- History, nature, safe, low crime compared to large city.
- Churches & families working together
- All schools of county & programs, volunteer spirit, good government services-streets, police, fire
- Civic pride and responsibility and participation. Don’t see division
- Small town, don’t feel like strangers in the community. Friendly.
- Church, schools, leaders in community
- Attitude (positive), positive action
- Excellent school system. Responsive city & county government, active volunteers
- Continual fundraisers, like all the parks, lots of parks
- Wonderful Churches, Equal Opportunity, Potential for Growth
- People that work together. The fantastic Walton Fireworks display, it’s that largest in the state. Lewis Cass Band
- Diversity of business within county. Good civic leaders leading community, great leadership from non-profits including United Way.
- Diversity. “Those same leaders that had the ability to recognize diversity’s value and importance.”
- Families, schools, (handled Hispanic families). Sense of history (traditions)
- A great sense of support of students and their activities
- People-friendly & helpful
- In Walton-can breath the fresh air, not living so close to one another making a lot of noise.
- Spirit of family creates volunteerism, empowerment of individuals, encouragement and strength to do new things.
- What we’re doing downtown. River Trail

C.A.R.E. Campaign, United Way of Cass County
Interview Responses

4. WHAT THREE WISHES DO YOU HAVE THAT WOULD MAKE CASS COUNTY AN EVEN MORE VITAL AND HEALTHLY COMMUNITY?

1)  
   - More involvement from people that don’t get involved
   - More Industry – Work to keep young people in community
   - Job opportunities – business growth
   - More shopping opportunities
   - I love seeing old buildings and structures being restored; it preserves the history and the culture of our community
   - Help clean up some of the area neighborhoods
   - More fair-mindedness
   - More industry to attract people to our community
   - Leisure/recreation activities-Commercial or public based (movie theatres & restaurants)
   - Keep young people in community.
   - Get rid of empty stores downtown, fix them up
   - More shopping choices
   - People accept each other for their differences
   - More integration with newly arrived ethnic groups and African American groups
   - More live entertainment, places to go
   - Hire Administrators who are for education and not political gain
   - Improved health care – more access to alternative health care options
   - Stronger industrial base
   - More & better paying jobs
   - More integration of the Hispanic/Anglo Communities
   - More open athletic facilities/tournaments between all the CC communities (schools)
   - Drug testing/interference with school activities
   - We can grow united as one community
   - Define family in the entire community-transfer the love within families to community
   - Drug Store, restaurant downtown, card shop

2)  
   - Get rid of negative – You Said It Column
   - A place for young people to socialize to keep them off the streets
   - More shopping choice
   - More business opportunities
   - The growing churches bring a closer, more caring and sharing community
   - See more community involvement to welcome our Hispanic population.
   - Less discrimination
   - Better paying jobs
   - Teaching how to keep home in good shape-pride in home
All groups focus positive energy together. There is a lot of energy here.
Get rid of trash on streets, people take pride & care
Fewer empty buildings more things for teens to do
Closer connection between people, all (no labels)
More investment in infrastructure (occurring), restore crumbling buildings
More “nice” restaurants other than fast food
Elect people who focus more on community instead of political gain
Better career opportunities
More and better paying jobs
Kids that get their needs met
More jobs for college-educated people
Promote/educate people in other communities about activities in the larger communities (“left out”)
Community events
That Hispanics know more English and understand the leys más (laws more)
More high paying jobs to draw back our children after they graduate from college
Better understanding between residents and Hispanics

3)
Emphasize the positive-Keep working on physical appearance of Logansport. Little Turtle Waterway
Strong Leadership with a vision for the future
Business Growth
More activities for teenagers
More opportunities keep me and my money in town
More retail businesses
More businesses and industry for a strong economy
More attractive retail business to attract shoppers
Youth give consideration to other people – Parent/Child “Character Training”
Time and place to kick back, relax, clear mind - Good Blues Lounge
Have more get-togethers, like 4H fair, something in Spring, Cookouts
Job opportunities
Spend more time in groups, any types of groups, more people out of homes within neighborhoods & communities.
Provide outlets for people to be heard.
Little Turtle Walking Trail completed
Higher level of choices of retail stores
More access to and better recreational & leisure activities
Retaining our children so they will raise their kids here
More middle-and lower-income families who are able to buy their own homes
More wellness --- decreased smoking, decreased overweight, decreased alcoholism
More activities (like fair) that brings the whole county together
People in the county more involved in local government

C.A.R.E. Campaign, United Way of Cass County
Cass County Community Summit November 15, 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9:00 to 9:30 AM</th>
<th>Introductions- Seeing Cass County as a Whole</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who is here and where we come from</td>
<td>All</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please attach to world map a flag to indicate where you were born, or grew up as a child (the place you associate with home when you think of your childhood.)*

*Then, place on Cass County map a bubble pin where you live/work & a heart sticker on a place outside your home but in CC where you love to go, where you connect in a meaningful way to others who live & work here. Then choose a seat at a table and introduce yourself to others there table by describing where you placed their heart & why.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9:30 – 10:00 AM</th>
<th>Welcome Joyce Gephardt, United Way of Cass County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Care Campaign and Introduction of Design Team – Discovering Cass County as a Community that Cares</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry and what this community had to say in the Care Campaign</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plenary debrief.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share with a partner: What was your inner conversation as you listened...things you noticed...connections to your own life? What community values, strengths, practices did you notice?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a table group: Record on post-it notes 3-5 of this community “positive core” strengths, values, and practices as a community that cares. Then have a table rep place those on the Cass County Hope Map under the destination “A Place Where People Care for One Another “</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10:15 – 10:30 pm</th>
<th>Overview of Appreciative Inquiry and of the Day . Bliss Browne, President, Imagine Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand-Imagine-Create process.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.imaginechicago.org">www.imaginechicago.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose:</td>
<td>Articulating the positive core of Cass County as a community that cares and creating a vision for leveraging community investment and the future of human services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10:30-11:15 am</th>
<th>Activity #1 A Welcoming Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story Teller: Dr. Eric Knabel. Why Cass County has been a welcoming place for him and his family.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Understand&quot; Activity (done in pairs). Think of someone specific you have met, someone still &quot;on the edge&quot; in Cass County--a newcomer, a young person, a person living alone, a low income family. Describe them and your connection to them. Why is it important that they feel they belong here?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine: What can you and others do to help make that more possible? How would making that effort benefit you and the community as a whole? In what ways might they be able to contribute more to the community if they were better connected?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a group: Share your thoughts and list the top 3 to 5 ideas (one per note card) from your group on ways to enhance community welcome, especially for those now at the margin. Please write LARGE enough for your ideas to be read by others at a distance. Place these on the CC Hope Map in the &quot;A Welcoming Place&quot; destination.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11:15 am-noon  Activity #2  A Place That Values Young People

**Story Tellers:** Betsy Marchand, Jessica Greiner. What makes them feel valued. What opportunities they see for young people in Cass County.

**Understand** (in pairs): What makes Cass County a good place for young people now? In what ways are young people most engaged and visible as community builders and contributors?

**Imagine:** What could significantly expand the engagement of young people and help develop their identity as owners of Cass County’s future? What ideas do you have for intergenerational projects that could strengthen the future of this community and really benefit from the ideas, energy and vision that young people bring?

**As a group:** Record your group’s best ideas for expanding youth engagement and intergenerational connection (one per note card) and post them on the CC Hope Map in the "A Place that Values Young People" destination.

Noon-12:45 pm  Activity #3  A Place of Vital Community Connections

**Story Teller:** Dr. John Bevan. What drew him here. A story of community connection and support.

**Understand:** (discuss in pairs) Think of a time when you or someone close to you needed a local resource—a service, a business, a volunteer opportunity, and you weren't sure how to find it. What did you do to make the connections you needed? Who were some of the people and institutions that helped you make those connections? **Record on post it notes some of the names of institutions and individuals that now serve as important “community connectors”**

**Now imagine** that you in charge of creating a new community resource network that will improve community connectedness around areas vital to people’s lives in Cass County. Whom would you involve in designing and running it? How would you want it to work? What information would it include? How might an organized resource network strengthen the community?

**As a group:** Discuss your thoughts about strengthening community connections. List the top 3 to 5 actionable ideas (one per card) on the CC Hope Map in the "A Place for Organizing Hope" destination.

12:45-1:45 pm  Lunch Break and Hope Map Review.

You are encouraged to move to a new table group for lunch so you can share across groups some of the ideas coming out of your morning’s discussion.

**Presentation of Videography Project “A Window on Cass County” Century Career Center Students**

Post presentation and lunch, all gather around the Hope Map to take a look at the group’s work and to identify the hopes displayed on the map you see as most vital to the future. Place 3 different color sticky dots (one for each destination) on the ideas that you see as highest potential and impact, and that most attract your own commitment.

1:45-2:30 pm  Organizing our Hopes and Taking Action Activity

Once everyone has had time to identify and vote for their highest hopes, small common interest groups will be organized around key areas of most interest.

**Group Task:** Give flesh to the dream. Define and create the future you value.

1. The year is 2007. Imagine Cass County as you really want it to be, from the perspective of the hope area you have chosen. As a group, create a vivid and detailed picture that includes:
   a. What is happening?
   b. How did this come about; what helped it happen?
c. How are newcomers and young people involved?

d. What organizing structures are key to this vision and make it visible to others?

e. What makes this vision exciting to you?

2. Capture this in a Hope Statement or Picture. Draft on the provided puzzle piece paper.

   a. Use vivid language or images.
   b. Be positive, bold, provocative; express it in a way that will attract others.

3. Each table group will have 2 minutes to share their Hope Statement with full group and piece together a new vision of Cass County as a connected community of the whole that cares.

Personal reflection and (e)valuation: Please fill out the attached conference reflection and commitment sheet.

1. What has been the highlight of today’s summit for you? 2. What is an application where you feel Appreciative Inquiry might be helpful? 3. With whom will you share this idea? With whom would you like to work to realize this possibility? 4. What additional support or connection do you need to move forward? 5. What’s the first thing you’ll do when you leave to work on this?

2:35- 3:00 pm Closing Circle

Please form a circle around which the Brass Ring will be passed. Each person can speak or pass as you are invited to share something that you have found to be particularly useful from the summit around which you would like to take action and move forward as a vital part of a community that cares.

Thank you for coming!!!
NEWS RELEASE

FOR: Immediate Release

DATE: August 26, 2003

CONTACT: Sharon A. Kish, President
          United Way of Porter County
          219-464-3583
          Email: sharonk@unitedwaypc.org

United Way Launches “Imagine Porter County”
New Program Brings about New Vision for the Future

Valparaiso, IN – United Way of Porter County was chosen by the Indiana Association of United Ways and the Lilly Foundation to be one of only two Indiana United Ways to pilot an Appreciative Community Assessment Process. This project is called Imagine Porter County. This program is different than the traditional community needs assessment done every three years. The project is being developed using a tool called “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI).

AI suggests that instead of focusing on problems and what is wrong in a community, an organization or social system must first understand the “best of what is”, which will lead them to imagine and create a collectively envisioned future.

Through the Imagine Porter County pilot project, United Way will have solutions to implement, strengths to build upon, opportunities to pursue, community visions to realize, and newly energized community involvement. United Way will also create a model for other United Ways to replicate.

United Way’s first task was to recruit a Design Team, whose tasks include creating the assessment questionnaire, designing and implementing the project, holding a community summit, and documenting the project and sharing the findings. United Way’s partner in this project is the United Way of Cass County. Bliss Browne of Imagine Chicago is the project’s consultant. Browne has lead AI projects throughout the U.S. and on seven continents worldwide.

(more)
The Design Team represents various sectors from the entire community including individuals from social service, city/county government, business, agriculture, labor, education, health care, as well as United Way Board members and staff. Volunteers will be seeking community input from groups throughout the county. Sharon Kish, United Way President, said that “it is our hope to engage as many Porter County residents as possible over the next few months. We value everyone's views and opinions”. Residents can fill out the Imagine Porter County questionnaire on-line at www.unitedwaypc.org/imagine/.

There will be a community Leadership Summit on September 26th, 2003 at Woodland Park in Portage, Indiana. For more information about participating in this community assessment, call 219-464-3583 or email info@unitedwaypc.org.

#   #   #
IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY

TALKING POINTS

THE PROJECT:

♦ United Way of Porter County is one of two United Ways selected by the Indiana Association of United Ways and the Lilly Foundation to pilot an Appreciative Community Assessment Process for use by other United Ways. We will develop the assessment tool and incorporate use of the Appreciative Inquiry process.

♦ The opportunity is to create a model for the UW to reframe community assessment as a values-based community building process rather than a deficit-oriented data gathering campaign. The Assessment enhances/redesigns a traditional comprehensive needs assessment process into a state-of-the-art process by incorporating a more future-oriented, solutions-oriented focus, with richer dialogue and greater community involvement.

♦ Bliss Browne, creator of Imagine Chicago, will consult with UWPC to provide assistance with goal refinement, evaluation of strategies needed, writing community interview and focus group protocols, and conducting a one-day community summit.

♦ The final report will be a replacement to the traditional “deficit” assessment used for making funding decisions. Rather than deficits to fill, the United Way will likely have possible solutions to implement, strengths to build upon, opportunities, community visions to realize, and new energized community ownership to continue to engage.

Appreciative Inquiry

♦ The major assumption of AI is that in every community something works and that change can be managed through the identification of what works, and to focus on how to do more of what works. Focusing on what works as opposed to what problems the community is having differentiates AI from traditional problem solving approaches.

♦ The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them.

♦ Since Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in a community, it stirs up memories of energizing moments of success creating a new energy that is positive and synergistic. We will emphasize aspirations.

♦ Through Imagine Porter County groups, one-on-one interviews and other opportunities for dialogue, we will practice looking for what works and finding ways to do more of that.

The Design Team

♦ The project has representation from various sectors of the greater community of Porter County.

♦ This includes people from the fields of social service, city/county government, business, agriculture, labor, education, faith-based, and health care. In addition, the team includes United Way Board and staff and agency representatives.

♦ Time frame of commitment will be until late October, 2003.
IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY

PREPARING FOR TOPIC SELECTION

Interview two people of your choosing by reading the lead-in paragraph, then asking the questions. Please take notes so you can share the responses. The responses to these questions will help our design team select topics for our community inquiry.

We live in a time of remarkable change and opportunity, a time for rethinking relationships among groups, organizations, and communities of all kinds. We’ve seen historic changes around the globe…increasing democratization, rapid spread of global communications, breakthroughs in health. At the same time, we’ve seen changes, breakthroughs, and opportunities in our own community of Porter County…rebirth of the steel industry, diversification of the economy, beautification of parks and buildings, introduction to new cultures, awesome volunteer spirit, tremendous fundraising efforts, historical preservation, outstanding educational facilities, and caring faith-based communities. These and other changes and victories signal an open moment in world and in Porter County community history – a time for great hope and opportunities.

1. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN PORTER COUNTY?

2. WHAT FIRST BROUGHT YOU HERE?

3. WHAT STANDS OUT FOR YOU AS A TIME YOU FELT YOU WERE INVOLVED IN A REMARKABLE COMMUNITY EFFORT – WHICH GAVE EVERYONE INVOLVED A WAY TO CONTRIBUTE THEIR TALENT AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

   A) WHAT MADE IT A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE?

   B) WHAT DID YOU ACCOMPLISH AND HOW DID IT FEEL?

   C) WHAT WAS ESPECIALLY MEANINGFUL TO YOU?

   D) WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY?
4. WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE CORE FACTORS THAT GIVE “LIFE” TO OUR PORTER COUNTY COMMUNITY, THAT MAKE IT A SPECIAL PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK?

5. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY AS YOU WANT IT TO BE 3-5 YEARS FROM NOW. WHAT THREE WISHES DO YOU HAVE THAT WOULD MAKE PORTER COUNTY AN EVEN MORE VITAL AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY?

A) 

B) 

C) 

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: ____________________________
NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: ____________________________
IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY

Please read the introductory paragraph then interview another person by asking the following questions. Please listen and take a few notes so you can share their responses. The responses to these questions will help create a vision for the future of Porter County.

Thank you for your participation!

We live in a time of remarkable change and opportunity, a time for rethinking relationships among groups, organizations, and communities of all kinds. We’ve seen historic changes around the globe…and also here in our own community of Porter County. We have tremendous resources: our industries and their employees, our beautiful parks and recreational facilities, awesome volunteer spirit, strong charitable giving, historical preservation, outstanding educational institutions, culture and the arts, and caring faith-based communities. It is a time of great hope and opportunity. How will we use these resources to create a vibrant, welcoming, and healthy future for Porter County?

1. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community that values and welcomes everyone…

Who or what made you feel welcomed to Porter County and gave you a sense of belonging?

2. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community where everyone is involved in making a difference…

What stands out as a time when you were involved in a remarkable community effort, which gave people a way to contribute their talent and make a difference? What made it a powerful experience and especially meaningful to you? Who was involved and what was the common bond between all?

3. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community of vital connections that creates value for our residents, our region, our world…

What makes Porter County a special place to live and work? What are the key connections that have been especially important to you? What are the factors that make you proud to be a resident of Porter County? What do we have that would make people line up to come here?
4. Close your eyes and imagine Porter County as you want it to be 3-5 years from now. What two wishes do you have that would make Porter County an even more vibrant and healthy community; the place where everyone would want to work and live.

1.

2.

**DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**AGE:**
- Under 21 __________
- 21 – 30 _________
- 31 – 40 ________
- 41 - 50 __________
- 51 – 60 _________
- 61 – 70 _________
- 71 & Over __________

**GENDER:**
- Male ____________
- Female __________

**RACE:**
- White ____
- Black or African American ____
- Hispanic or Latino______
- American Indian/Alaska Native ____
- Asian ___
- Other __________

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME:**
- Less than $35,000 _________
- $35,000 - $74,999________
- $75,000 - $99,999 _________
- $100,000 or more ________

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN PORTER COUNTY:**

**RESIDENCE:**
Please identify what city or town you live in or if you live in an unincorporated area. ______________ Zip Code __________

*******************************************************************************

Mark Your Calendar!
Please join us on Friday, September 26, 2003 at our Community Summit.

Please return this questionnaire to: United Way of Porter County
P.O. Box 2028
951 Eastport Centre Drive
Valparaiso, IN 46384
219-464-3583 Fax: 219-477-5845
Email: info@unitedwaypc.org
Website: www.unitedwaypc.org
IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY

YOUTH SURVEY

Please read the questions below and take a few notes so you can share your responses. The responses to these questions will help create a vision for the future of Porter County.

Thank you for your participation!

1. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community that values and welcomes everyone…

   Who or what makes Porter County a good place for kids and young adults? Where do you feel welcomed and supported? Please place those people, places, institutions on the map of Porter County.

2. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community where everyone is involved in making a difference…

   Has there ever been a time in which you were involved in a volunteer effort, which was meaningful to you and made you feel like you were making a difference?

3. Close your eyes and imagine Porter County 5-7 years from now. What will need to be here to bring you back and make you stay?

   1. 

   2.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

AGE: Under 18 __________ 19-20 _________ 21–25 ________ 26 and over _________

GENDER: Male __________ Female __________

RACE: White ____ Black or African American ____ Hispanic or Latino_____

   American Indian/Alaska Native ____ Asian ____ Other ____________

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN PORTER COUNTY: _______________________

RESIDENCE: City______________________________ Zip Code________________
IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY
INSTRUCTIONS for FACILITATORS

OVERALL INSTRUCTIONS: Our purpose is to stimulate conversation while collecting opinion. Your role is to encourage participation and provide a structure. You will primarily listen and record the general themes that come from the group’s discussion. You may have one group or multiple groups.

INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE BEGINNING: Assign or divide your audience into groups of 4-8 individuals. Ask them to sit in a circular arrangement so that each person can see the others. It is good to mix the people in each group so they do not necessarily know each other. Attempt to have even numbers in each group. Give each participant a copy of the questions. If you have one group, you are the listener and recorder of the group’s answers. If you have multiple groups, assign one member of each group to be the recorder and give that person an extra blank questionnaire. There will be a one-hour time limit.

REMEMBER: Stay on time, Listen, Record.

READ OPENING COMMENTS:

Thanks for joining us today and for agreeing to be part of an IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY group. Before we get started, let me take a minute and share with you why we are here and what we hope to accomplish. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY is a pilot project sponsored by United Way of Porter County. UWPC was one of two United Ways in the state chosen to conduct a new kind of community assessment. Between now and October, we are meeting with groups and individuals, like yourself, and talking about who we are as a community and exploring ways we might build on our strengths to make Porter County an even better place to live. We will be convening a community summit at the end of September to create a vision for our future, in terms of health and human services.

The questions we will ask are called “appreciative questions”. We will ask about times when you have seen things working at their best. Many times in the past, United Ways have asked about things that were not working well—the problems—so that we could fix them. In this case, we will inquire about the things that are working well—the successes—so that we can build on them. So we want you to think, remember, and share the details of experiences when things really worked well.

We are going to stay on a tight time schedule, because we respect your time commitment of one hour. However, if anyone would like to stay afterwards and continue our discussion, that would be great.
READ Our Ground Rules:

- Everyone will have an opportunity to share.
- Please listen to what others say and jot down some notes.
- Please share your thoughts; they may stimulate someone else’s.
- Respect the comments of others. Each person’s comments are their personal beliefs, feelings, and perceptions. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions.
- All comments are encouraged. Please do not criticize, attack or debate each other.
- Remember, this is a process of POSITIVE inquiry.

PART I INSTRUCTIONS: (15 minutes—5 minutes of interviewing and 10 minutes sharing)
Read the opening paragraph below to set the stage for the questions. This section is to begin to put people at ease and create comfort for them to share more openly. Ask people to pair off within their groups and share their thoughts about Question 1. If you have an odd number in the group, ask three people to work together. After 2-3 minutes, ask the partners to switch. Ask each pair to share their partner’s answers with the entire group as a form of introduction. About a minute per person.

READ PROCESS COMMENTS: (You can read or ask a member of the group.)

We live in a time of remarkable change and opportunity, a time for rethinking relationships among groups, organizations, and communities of all kinds. We’ve seen historic changes around the globe…and also here in our own community of Porter County. We have tremendous resources: our industries and their employees, our beautiful parks and recreational facilities, awesome volunteer spirit, strong charitable giving, historical preservation, outstanding educational institutions, culture and the arts, and caring faith-based communities. It is a time of great hope and opportunities. How will we use these resources to create a vibrant, welcoming, and healthy future for Porter County?

As you converse with your partner, please jot down a few notes, as you will then introduce your partner to the whole group. Our goal is to discover the common themes and experiences. Try to answer the question as a whole. The sub-questions are there to help clarify your thoughts.

1. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community that values and welcomes everyone….

How long have you lived in Porter County? Who or what made you feel welcomed and gave you a sense of belonging?

The power occurs when the group becomes engaged and energized. The facilitator helps the group acknowledge the difference in atmosphere and attitude.

PART II INSTRUCTIONS: (30 minutes—15 minutes interviewing (again switching midway) and 15 minutes sharing).
Continue the same format with Questions 2 and 3. Ask the group to share their answers and look for common themes. Help the group identify commonalities.

2. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community where everyone is involved in making a difference….

What stands out as a time when you were involved in a remarkable community effort, which gave people a way to contribute their talent and make a difference? What made it a powerful experience and especially meaningful to you? Who was involved and what was the common bond between all?
3. IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY as a community of vital connections that creates value for our residents, our region, our world.....

What makes Porter County a special place to live and work? What are the key connections that have been especially important to you? What are the factors that make you proud to be a resident of Porter County? What do we have that would make people line up to come here?

PART III INSTRUCTIONS: (15 minutes)
Ask each participant to spend about three minutes silently answering Question 4. Ask each person to share their answers and look for common themes. The facilitator or the assigned group recorder should record the commonalties. We will be collecting the page with Question 4 and the demographic information.

4. Close your eyes and imagine Porter County as you want it to be 3-5 years from now. What two wishes do you have that would make Porter County an even more vibrant and healthy community; the place where everyone would want to work and live.

1.
2.

READ ENDING COMMENTS:
Thanks so much for taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences. We have learned a lot about Porter County and the possibilities for the future as a result of our conversations.

I want to make sure that I have recorded your thoughts and ideas, especially the common themes in a way all are comfortable with. Please let me know if I misunderstood what was said or have left anything out.

Take a few minutes to review the common themes that were expressed in the group.

READ: I will be collecting Question 4 with your two wishes. Please take a moment to fill in the demographic information on the bottom. You do not have to identify yourself, but we want to make sure we have representation from the entire community in this process.

We will be holding a community summit on Friday, September 26th at Woodland Park in Portage to review the information learned from the IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY groups and to create a vision for the future. If you would like to participate, please sign your name and address and email on the sign-up sheet, and we will mail you an invitation.

I know that we have been on a strict time frame here, but I would be happy to stay if anyone has additional comments or would like to continue our discussion.

DON’T FORGET: On behalf of United Way, we again want to thank you for your time and for sharing your vision of Porter County.

Collect the pages with Question 4 and fill out the Group Summary and Demographic Summary and return them to United Way. Thank You!
Imagine Porter County as a community that values and welcomes everyone……

♦ “Don’t judge a book by its cover and don’t be such judgmental people.” 14 year old middle school girl
♦ “When I came her as a young bride, everyone treated me like a cousin, like family and that is still true today.” Resident of Portage for 45 years
♦ “Hearing about alcohol and drug stories makes me feel unsafe at times.” Female middle school student
♦ “I think Porter County is a wonderful place to live. Family is the word that comes to mind.” Response from website
♦ “Porter County is a community that is connected and cares for one another and for the new people entering the county.” 15 year old female
♦ “My family has been in Porter County for 170 years. It is home.” Male public service employee
♦ “I’ve been coming into Porter County ever since early childhood. It had always been a second home until I made the decision to move here permanently.” 40 year old male
♦ “I have moved out of state twice, but always come back.”
♦ “I believe that people are the key. Porter County is a community that shares common goals and values.”
♦ “I love living in Porter County—it is just the right size for me.”
♦ “Friendly, honest people who are hardworking and respond to people in need. Conservative nature yet strong-willed religious base.” 60 year old female who has lived here for 42 years.
♦ “While the world is constantly changing around us, Porter County is a place that feels unchanged and safe to me. It is my home, I belong here.” Nursing student from the website

Imagine Porter County as a community where everyone is involved in making a difference…

♦ “I helped organize books at the library. This made me feel like I helped my community.” 13 year old girl
♦ “It was wonderful to see the community, clients, and staff all working toward one goal—making apartments habitable for homeless families.”
♦ “Volunteering with Christmas in April was powerful because of the willingness of people to give unselfishly of their time and effort.”
♦ “I love the sense of giving here. Everyone wants to help.” 22 year old
♦ “An abundance of community volunteer opportunities for adults and teens alike.”
♦ “School really began to get me involved. It felt really neat to have a group effort where we really worked hard to accomplish a task.” 14 year old
♦ “Porter County is a special place. The depth of caring people have for each other and the willingness to provide help where needed is extraordinary. Neighbor to Neighbor.”
“Christmas in April was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life—the house I had the honor to work on was owned by an elderly woman who was disabled. Knowing how this woman could be me or someone close to me one day heightened my sense of empathy and desire to do everything I could to help.” *PMHS worker*

**Imagine Porter County as a community of vital connections that creates value……..**

✶ “My family and my connection to the steel industry give me my sense of belonging.” 38 year old steel worker
✶ “The university injects youth, diversity, and the arts into the county.”
✶ “The closeness of the wholesome farmlands and the blend of communities and the rural area.”
✶ “Downtown needs to stay active and keep up because I have been noticing it looks poorer and poorer.” 15 year old high school student
✶ “Porter County to me is a very safe environment to raise my children in.”
✶ “Walk of Life—multiple relatives died of cancer and the whole community, families and afflicted all involved on one night of commonality.” 23 year old government employee
✶ “The agencies in our community work very well together with good communication.”
✶ “My husband and I walked in the Popcorn parade with the Porter Memorial Hospital float. Our son was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for one month and we become very close to the nurses and staff. Many families marched from those who were in NICU at the same time as us to those who were there 20 years ago.”
✶ “Porter County is a special place to live because of the people, the hardworking tradition of the steel workers and the academic achievement of Valparaiso University.”
✶ “Even though Porter County is a large area, it has a small town feel.”

**Hopes for the future…**

✶ “Porter County needs more activities for youth that are safe and fun.”
✶ “More affordable housing for the disabled.”
✶ “The need for public transportation.”
✶ “Cleaner water and more environmental programs to insure healthier life styles.”
✶ “To grow with more businesses and work together so that every business will grow and be successful.”
✶ “I would like my children to raise their families here.”
✶ “I would like to keep our farm land and not be another area of miles of housing projects and strip malls.”
✶ “To have a safe and healthy community.”
✶ “A totally diversified community with prejudice gone.”
✶ “More good paying jobs and job training.”
✶ “Employers allowing employees to volunteer on work time.”
✶ “Although times change and we need to move with them, keeping Porter County more slow-paced and comfortable is what I wish.”
WELCOME TO THE IMAGINE PORTER COUNTY LEADERSHIP SUMMIT!

Creating a Vision for the Future
of Health and Human Services in Porter County

A community that values and welcomes everyone
A community where everyone is involved in making a difference
A community of connections that create value for our residents, our region, our world
A community committed to becoming even more vibrant and healthy

“To advocate human conversation as the means to restore hope to the future is as simple as I can get. But I have seen there is no more powerful way to initiate significant change than to convene a conversation…It is always like this. Real change begins with the simple act of people talking about what they care about.”

--Margaret Wheatley

Obstacles to cooperation and human enterprise that long seemed immovable have collapsed…. The best path to the good society, we believe, is the construction of great organizations/communities that nurture and magnify the best in human beings.”

--David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva
Authors of Organizational Wisdom and Executive Courage
# AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:45 – 9:00</td>
<td>Coffee, registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 – 9:30</td>
<td>Welcome and Introductions: Bill Hanna, Board Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mapping our Hopes and Vital Connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overview of Imagine Porter County: Sharon Kish and the Imagine Porter County Design Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>“Listening to the Future and Thinking About the Whole: Connections that Transform Community” --Bliss Browne, Imagine Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:45 am</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry Paired Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45 – 11:00 am</td>
<td>Reports from the Field Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 – noon</td>
<td>Debriefing of Interview Themes in Table Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Luncheon buffet available starting at 11:30 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noon</td>
<td>Entertainment-- Portage High School Choraliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 -- 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Morning Session Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 -- 1:30</td>
<td>Organizing for the Future We Want: Where Do We Go from Here?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:00</td>
<td>Moving Forward in Hope: Concluding Reflections and Commitments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Is An “Appreciative Inquiry” (AI) Summit?

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) — To appreciate means to value—to understand those things of value worth valuing. To inquire means to study, to ask questions, to search. AI is, therefore, a collaborative search to identify and understand the community’s strengths, its potentials, the greatest opportunities, and people’s hopes for the future.

The WHOLE SYSTEM participates — a cross-section of as many interested parties as is practical. That means more diversity and less hierarchy than is usual in a working meeting, and a chance for each person to be heard and to learn other ways of looking at the task at hand.

Future scenarios – for the community or issue - are put into broader perspective. That means thinking about the whole together before acting locally. This enhances shared understanding and greater commitment to act. It also increases the range of potential actions.

People SELF-MANAGE their work, and use DIALOGUE – not “problem-solving” – as the main tool. That means helping each other do the tasks and taking responsibility for our perceptions and actions.

COMMON GROUND and NARRATIVE RICH INTERACTION rather than “conflict management,” or negotiation as the frame of reference. That means honoring our differences rather than having to reconcile them, and searching for meaning, and direction in stories that honor and connect us to our “history as positive possibility”.

INSPIRED ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE WHOLE — Because the “whole system” is involved, it is easier to make more rapid decisions, and to make commitments to action in a public way—in an open way that everyone can support and help make happen. Internal inspiration, shared leadership, and voluntary initiative guide the movement to action. People work on what they share a passion about, what they most care about and believe will make the difference. Real change begins with the simple act of people acting on what they care about, in the context of shared vision that matters.
The Imagine Process

Understand
- Affirmative topics
- Positive questions
- Value-oriented
- Intergenerational

Developing Porter County’s Future

Imagine
- Possible
- Visionary
- Hopeful

Create
- Practical
- Visible
- Organized

-Bliss Browne
www.imaginechicago.org
Understand: Articulating the Positive Core of Porter County

Traditional Change Management

• What problems are you having?

• What are your needs?

• Fix what is broken.

Appreciative Inquiry

What is working really well and how do we amplify it?

What impacts/outcomes do we hope to accomplish?

Search for best practices and most inspiring images, aspirations and connections

The FOUNDATION STONES of AI

• Words Create Worlds
• Questions Determine Outcomes
• Positive Images Inspire Positive Action
• Stories are Powerful; Leaders Share Stories
• Structures are needed to Support Community Visioning
• When Collective Imagination is mobilized, people find energy and power to work together on behalf of what they most value

Problem solving as a process for inspiring and sustaining human system change is limited. Deficit analysis, powerful in diagnosis, often undermines human organizing, because it is likely to create a sense of threat, separation, defensiveness and deference to expert hierarchies. Change management methods that evoke stories, and affirm and compel groups of people to envision an image of the future grounded in the best from the past, have the greatest potential to produce deep and sustaining change.

When the collective imagination is mobilized, people innovate. Working together, they can create effective and inspiring ways to move toward the shared ideal images and find energy and power to do so.
Exercise #1 Appreciative Inquiry—Conversation in Pairs

Purpose: Listed below are questions intended to help us begin articulating the positive core of Porter County and creating a vision for the future of health and human services here. We want to invite your best thinking. What is the future you most want? How can we begin, through this Imagine process and in this leadership summit, to come together to further develop a Porter County:

- That values and welcomes everyone?
- Where everyone is involved in making a difference?
- Where connections create value for our residents, our region, and our world?

Note: Please take brief notes, and use your skills as an interviewer as you listen and go deeper into your partner’s experiences, visions, and stories.

Question #1 A Place of Welcome

A strength often cited in the initial Imagine interviews was that Porter County is a welcoming community, a community which values and practices hospitality:

Why did you choose to live (or work) here?

What factors contribute most to making Porter County a welcoming community now?

Think of someone specific you have met, someone still “on the edge” in Porter County—a newcomer, a young person, a person living alone, a low-income family—who might still feel unwelcome or currently be disconnected.

What could you and others do to help that “outsider” feel more welcome, better connected to this community?

How would making that effort benefit you and the community as a whole?
What follows each set of questions are topically related excerpts from the first round of community interviews. As you read through these, note the ones that especially resonate with your own experience...

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS ON A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

• “When I came here as a young bride, everyone treated me like a cousin, like family and that is still true today.” Resident of Portage for 45 years

• “I think Porter County is a wonderful place to live. Family is the word that comes to mind.” Response from website

• “Porter County is a community that is connected and cares for one another and for the new people entering the county.” 15 year old female

• “My family has been in Porter County for 170 years. It is home.” Male public service employee

• “I’ve been coming into Porter County ever since early childhood. It had always been a second home until I made the decision to move here permanently.” 40 year old male

• “I have moved out of state twice, but always come back.”

• “I believe that people are the key. Porter County is a community that shares common goals and values.”

• “I love living in Porter County—it is just the right size for me.”

• “(Porter County has) friendly, honest people who are hardworking and respond to people in need. Conservative nature yet strong-willed religious base.” 60-year-old female who has lived here for 42 years.

• “While the world is constantly changing around us, Porter County is a place that feels unchanged and safe to me. It is my home, I belong here.” Nursing student from the website

• “Don’t judge a book by its cover and don’t be such judgmental people.” 14-year-old middle school girl

• Hearing about alcohol and drug stories makes me feel unsafe at times.” Female middle school student
Question #2  Imagine everyone involved in making a difference…

Meaningful public activities deepen our sense of purpose and belonging. Many people describe volunteer activities as the “high point” of their involvement in this community.

Think of a time you have been part of an exceptional community effort here that involved people from all parts of the county – young and old, rich and poor, farmer and steelworker, student and retiree, long time residents and newcomers?

Describe the effort and what attracted you and others to get involved…

What did it accomplish and what factors contributed to its success?

What did you do, and what did others on the project do that made it possible for so many different people to come together?

What can you suggest as effective strategies for getting more people – across a wider range of ages and backgrounds – engaged in volunteer activities?

INTERVIEW EXCERPTS ON COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- “I helped organize books at the library. This made me feel like I helped my community.” 13 year old girl
- “It was wonderful to see the community, clients, and staff all working toward one goal—making apartments habitable for homeless families.”
- “Volunteering with Christmas in April was powerful because of the willingness of people to give unselfishly of their time and effort.”
- “I love the sense of giving here. Everyone wants to help.” 22 year old
- “Abundance of community volunteer opportunities for adults and teens alike.”
- “School really began to get me involved. It felt really neat to have a group effort where we really worked hard to accomplish a task.” 14 year old
- “Porter County is a special place. The depth of caring people have for each other and the willingness to provide help where needed is extraordinary. Neighbor to Neighbor.”
- “Christmas in April was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life—the house I had the honor to work on was owned by an elderly woman who was disabled.”
Knowing how this woman could be me or someone close to me one day heightened my sense of empathy and desire to do everything I could to help.” PMHS worker
Question # 3  Imagine Porter County as a community of vital connections that creates value…

One of the critical competencies of a thriving community is the ability to collaborate-- to rapidly pull from the strengths of everyone involved on a project or campaign-- and to synthesize everyone’s contributions into an idea and result better than anyone could have created alone.

- What have you found to be the most distinctive strengths of Porter County in the areas listed below- things you feel can be built upon to create a thriving future here:
  
  A. Our physical assets:
  
  B. Our people and ways of working:
  
  C. Our values:

Imagine that your job is

- To create a county in which no one is wasted or left behind by
  - helping people develop their imagination and skills as county “creators”
  - creating meaningful opportunities for everyone, especially groups on the margin and young people, to invest themselves in the county’s future.

- To help the county learn to think of itself as a whole rather than in divided terms

Design some key elements of the process you would create to make this happen:

- What would you do first?

- Whom would you invite to participate? (Think especially of people who would find this worthwhile, and with whom you would really like to work)

- What organizations would you try to get involved? (e.g. schools, businesses, community groups, government, etc.)

- What would motivate you to want to do this work?

- What would you anticipate might be resistance you would encounter within yourself and from others as you set about this project?
INTERVIEW EXCERPTS ON A COMMUNITY OF VITAL CONNECTIONS THAT CREATE VALUE

- “My family and my connection to the steel industry give me my sense of belonging.” 38 year old steel worker

- “The university injects youth, diversity, and the arts into the county.”

- “The closeness of the wholesome farmlands and the blend of communities and the rural area.”

- “Downtown needs to stay active and keep up because I have been noticing it looks poorer and poorer.” 15 year old high school student

- “Porter County to me is a very safe environment to raise my children in.”

- “Walk of Life—multiple relatives died of cancer and the whole community, families and afflicted all involved on one night of commonality.” 23 year old government employee

- “The agencies in our community work very well together with good communication.”

- “My husband and I walked in the Popcorn parade with the Porter Memorial Hospital float. Our son was in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for one month and we become very close to the nurses and staff. Many families marched from those who were in NICU at the same time as us 20 years ago.”

- “Porter County is a special place to live because of the people, the hardworking tradition of the steel workers and the academic achievement of Valparaiso University.”

- “Even though Porter County is a large area, it has a small town feel.”
Question # 4  Imagine Porter County as a Whole

Assume that tonight you go into a sound sleep and awaken 5 years into the future. The year is 2008. While you were asleep, many small and large changes happened---including some miracles -- and Porter County is changed in ways you would most like to see it—for yourself, for children, for grandchildren, for nature, the economy.

Table Debriefing #1

Self-Manage: Select a Discussion Leader, Timekeeper, Recorder and Reporter

- **DISCUSSION LEADER** – Assures that each person who wants to speak is heard within time available. Keeps group on track to finish on time.
- **TIMEKEEPER** – Keeps group aware of time left. Monitors report-outs and signals time remaining to person talking.
- **RECORDER** – Writes group’s output on flip charts, using speaker’s words. Asks person to restate long ideas briefly.
- **REPORTER** – Delivers report to large group in time allotted.

Discovering the Resources in Our Community

**Purpose:** To appreciate and learn about special experiences, visions, capabilities, and resources people bring to this summit.

**Steps:**
1. Share highlights of what you learned in questions 1 and 2 from the person you interviewed. Go around the table and get everyone’s ideas.

2. Assign a recorder to listen for patterns and common themes—for high point stories and trends/events/opportunities that provide a foundation for an even more vital future for Porter County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Powerful Stories about Inclusion and Engagement</th>
<th>Root Causes of Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factors that are causing, creating, or supporting community health, connection and empowered leadership at every level. (for example, current programs or initiatives that are effective and should be recognized).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. As a group, share what you listed as particular strengths in question #3 and decide how you want to fill in the chart below as a group:

**Strengths and Distinctive Capacities:**
From the perspective of leveraging the strengths of Porter County in the future to become an even more vibrant and healthy community for everyone here, discuss the strengths and distinctive capacities relative to (a) our physical assets, (b) our people and ways of working, (c) our values?

What are, in your table’s view, five significant strengths/assets of Porter County that will contribute to increasing health and well being in the future for everyone who lives here?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

How can we use these capacities as the foundation for a new community engagement process that leverages our existing strengths?

**If there is time and inclination,** create a metaphor to map or picture to represent your insights into “the positive core” of Porter County—strengths, special practices and values, capacities, and root causes of success—things that ignite good leadership at every level. For example the “positive core” might be pictured as a solar system, tree of life….etc.

**Reporter should be ready to share (in 3-4 minutes):**
- Your analysis of the positive core, (in metaphor if you can and like) AND
- One of the stories of community leadership that illustrates or helped inspire your thinking.
Dreams and Visions of the Future
Ideal Future Scenario of “PORTER COUNTY” We Most Want

**Purpose:** To imagine and visualize PORTER COUNTY in the future—the PORTER COUNTY future you want to work toward based on these background questions:
- What is the region calling us to be?
- What does our positive core indicate we can be—taking PORTER COUNTY to a new level?
- What are the most enlivening and exciting possibilities for our county to ignite citizen engagement at all levels?
- I will be most proud of PORTER COUNTY in 2008 when…?

**Self-Manage:** Select a Discussion Leader, Recorder, Timekeeper and Reporter

1. First, share stories and discoveries from the visioning question #4 of your interview conversation.

2. Place yourself 5 years into the future—it is 2008. From the perspective of the group you are part of, visualize the PORTER COUNTY you really want-- as if it exists now. What is happening that is new, better, different— as it relates valuing and welcoming everyone’s contribution and public participation, and creating healthy community connections?

**Dreams and Visions of the Future – Create A Group Report**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important, Provocative, Appealing Ideas for A Healthier, More Vibrant Community</th>
<th>Organizational Elements What elements are necessary in Porter County to bring these ideas to life?</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


## Reflections and Learnings:

*What are three key insights you will take with you from today’s summit?*

1.  
2.  
3.  

*What was the highlight of the day for you?*

*What was most useful?*

*What is one way you will apply something you learned today:*

*If there is a specific way you’d like to be involved in moving one of the ideas/visions that emerged from today forward, please specify it here:*

I would like to be involved in …

*Other Comments:*

Name_________________________________________________________________

*Thank you for participating!!*
Imagine your community as a place of vital and valuable connections……..

One of the critical competencies of a thriving community is the ability to collaborate—to rapidly pull from the strengths of everyone involved on a project or campaign—and to synthesize everyone’s contributions into an idea and a result that is better than anyone could have created alone.

Imagine that your job is……..

- To create a community in which no one is wasted or left behind by
  * helping people develop their imagination and skills as community “creators”.
  * creating meaningful opportunities for everyone, especially groups on the margin and young people, to invest themselves in your community’s future.

- To help your community learn to think of itself as a whole rather than in divided terms.

Design some key elements of the process you would create to make this happen:

- What would you do first?

- Whom would you invite to participate? (Think especially of people who would find this worthwhile and with whom you would really like to work.)

- What organizations would you try to get involved? (i.e., schools, businesses, community groups, government, etc.)

- What would motivate you to do this work?

- What would you anticipate might be resistance you would encounter within yourself and from others as you set about this project? How will you change that resistance into engagement?
**AI Pilot Steps in Brief**

**Step I - Planning Process**
- What is the AI process?
- What do we want to accomplish?
- How does AI help us meet our goals?
- Who should be on the planning team?
- Who do we want to involve?
- How should we proceed?
- Timeline to get it done?

**Step II - Development Process**
- Recruiting Design Team Members
- Initial Organizational Meetings - Getting to Know One Another
- Setting Goals

**Step II - Development**
- Developing a Plan
- Selecting Topics
- Designing the Questionnaire
- Developing an Interview Format
- Discussing, Rethinking, Collaborating

**Step III - Interviewing Process**
- Determine the scope of the interview process: Mass interviews or Representative Sampling?
- If mass interviews, how do we insure a broad cross-section covering all important stakeholder groups?
- If representative sampling, what are the important stakeholder groups and who speaks for them?
- How will we pre-test the questionnaire?
- How many interviewers will be needed, and how do we get them involved and trained?

**Step IV - Conducting Interviews**
- Putting people at ease and establishing a two-way dialogue
- Going beyond the simple questionnaire responses
- Probing for personal stories
- Keeping the focus on the positive
- Building on commonalities
- Finding out what is really important to people
- What would make the good things even better?

**Step V - “The Summit”**
- The means to inform and involve the community
- A time to relate compelling images and stories
- A place to share experiences and impressions
- A way to summarize the process and envision the future

**Step VI - Bringing the Project Together**
- Individual responses were compiled using an Excel spreadsheet
- Demographics were also tracked using Excel
- Data shared with the community

**Step VII - Debriefing**
- What are the things we did well?
- What are the things we would change next time?
- What did we learn from the overall experience?
- Where do we go from here?