



One Step At A Time

**WINCHESTER AND CLARK COUNTY
SEIZING THE MOMENT**



The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that equips people, organizations, communities, and networks with the tools to bridge divides, build capacity, and tackle shared challenges. The Harwood Institute’s work is rooted in a philosophy of Civic Faith and the practice of Turning Outward. Founded in 1988, the Institute partners with some of the world’s largest nonprofits, and its approach has spread to all 50 states across the US and 40 countries around the world.



The Greater Clark Foundation, located in Winchester, Ky., inspires a vision for the future by asking, “What’s Your Ambition?!” It is working to stimulate a community identity that is forward-leaning, self-sustaining, engaged and resilient through investments focused on civic and economic vitality; educational attainment; and health, well-being and quality of life. GCF also provides aspirational leadership to the Greater Clark County community by working upstream on the root causes of social problems in order to enhance the four conditions required to make long-term change: capacity, collaboration, communication and cohesion.

THE HARWOOD INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC INNOVATION
4915 St. Elmo St., Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814

Tel: 301-656-3669 | thi@theharwoodinstitute.org
Fax: 301-656-0533 | www.theharwoodinstitute.org

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WRITTEN BY
Marla Crockett
and
Richard C. Harwood

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INTRODUCTION

The people of the city of Winchester and Clark County are coming together to do something special—and enormously promising. At a time in America when so many communities are splintering apart and struggling to move ahead, even survive, people here are actively claiming greater control over their lives and futures.

The pride and progress of Winchester and Clark County is a hopeful sign for other small and rural communities that want to know if—and how—they can stop trying to recover some bygone era, and instead take intentional steps forward to discover their new future. It can be done; it is being done here—one step at a time.

It is nearly three years since the release of The Harwood Institute report, *Waving the Community's Flag*, an in-depth look at how community members view Winchester and Clark County. At that time in 2017, residents talked movingly of their abiding love for Winchester and Clark County, hailing it as a great place to live, filled with a spirit of generosity, small-town atmosphere, strong sense of belonging, and rich history. But they also described deep challenges.

One Step At A Time is a progress report, highlighting the many stories of action now taking root and the spreading of new productive ways of working together in the community. It is a roadmap for how to grow this progress over time. This progress includes:

- Where people once saw seemingly intractable challenges, including drug addiction, family breakdown, and a declining downtown, today action is being taken on all these fronts and many others and producing real, tangible gains.
- Where people once described fragmented leadership and organizations, marked by efforts that start and stop without explanation, today there is a growing network of leaders and groups working together with renewed common purpose and making a go of their efforts over time.

- Where people once felt neither seen nor heard, today many people from all walks of life feel their voices matter and they are part of something larger than themselves.
- Where people once saw divisions being sowed by race and culture, the location of where people live, between old versus new residents, and among religious denominations, today people are crossing these dividing lines and building a shared community.

Such positive steps didn't just happen overnight. Nor through isolated heroic acts. They are the result of everyday people's hard work, grit, ingenuity, and resilience—all things this community represents.



Photo © Michael Andrews

From Waiting Place to Catalytic

In 2017, some signs of progress were already evident in the community—from the Farmers' Market to the renovated Leeds Theatre to the new hospital and new bike and walking trails, among others. But, overall, people described a community that was stuck.

In The Harwood Institute framework *Community Rhythms: The Five Stages of Community Life*, Winchester and Clark County were in the first stage of readiness for change, "The Waiting Place." Every community is in one of the five stages, and each stage has fundamentally different implications for where a community is and how it can move forward.

In The Waiting Place, a community is just waiting—waiting for someone or something to swoop in and save it. There is a sense of *what's wrong*, but little agreement on what to do. A lack of trust in leaders and limited organizational capacity all undermine a community's ability to get things done. *Waving the Community's Flag* clearly documented these conditions in Winchester and Clark County.

Through people's brave and persistent efforts, the community has now moved into the early "Catalytic" stage, the third stage of readiness for change. In this stage, there are growing numbers of pockets of change emerging and the number of people and organizations stepping forward are increasing. This stage sets the foundation for more widespread growth and vibrancy. This movement—from The Waiting Place to Catalytic—is enormous progress in such a short period of time. It is progress the community can take great pride in. It is something the community now needs to build upon.

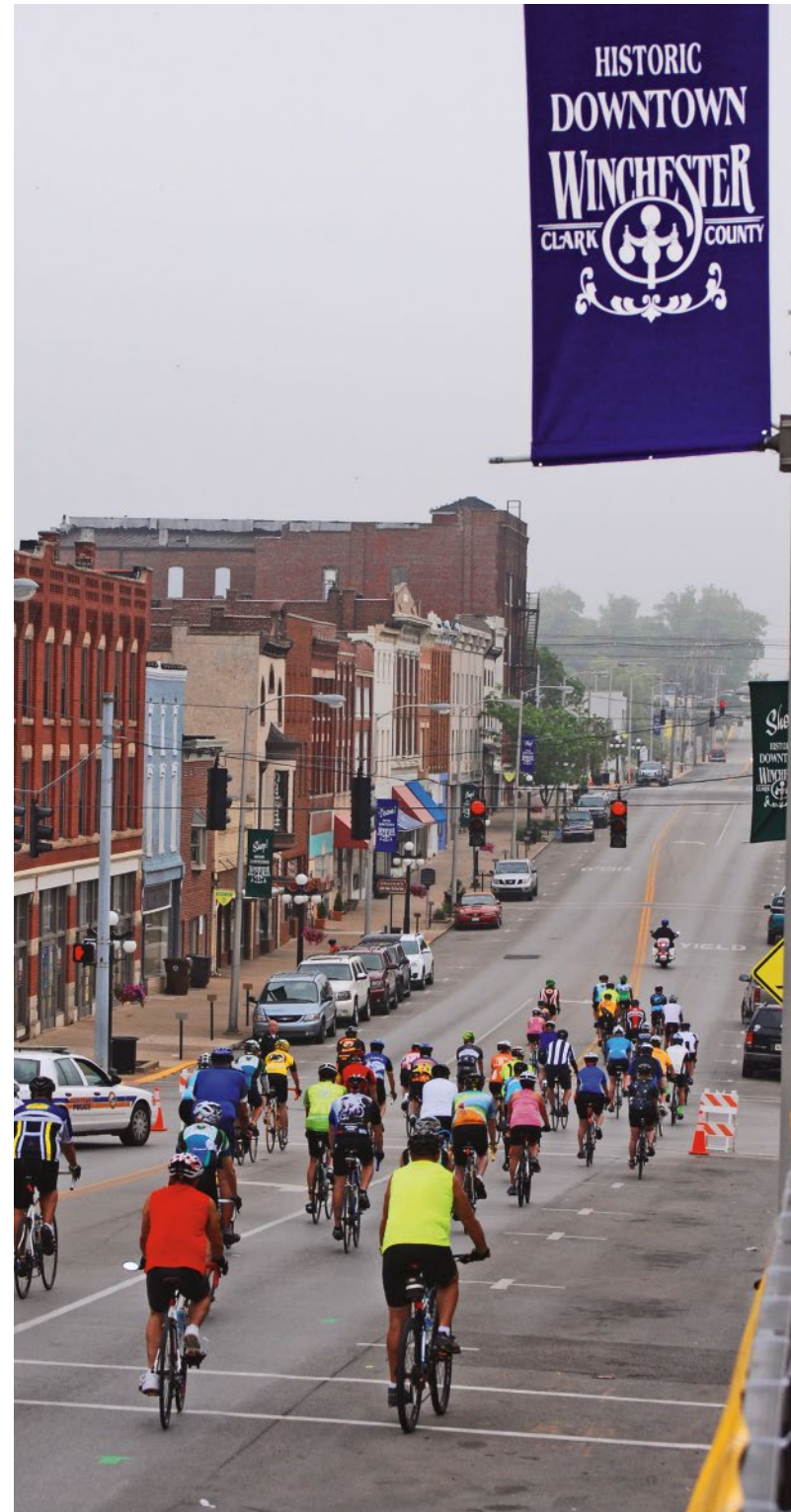


Photo © Michael Andrews

An Intentional Strategy

At issue in 2017 was how Winchester and Clark County could reach a more promising trajectory with increasing momentum and ever-expanding civic confidence. The Greater Clark Foundation partnered with The Harwood Institute on an intentional strategy to do just that.

Over the past 30 years, The Harwood Institute has learned that it is essential to meet a community where it is—not where we wish it might be. Wishful thinking does not help to address real challenges like drug addiction and kids feeling abandoned and family breakdown.

Communities regain their health and vitality by *growing* new efforts and renewing their strength over time. These efforts must be rooted in what matters to people, and these efforts must be largely shaped and created by the community itself.

Short-term wins must be coupled with longer-term gains. People need to see progress being made along the way if they are to engage for the long haul—especially if they are to believe we can come together to get things done.

The seedbed for this growth is the development of strong, positive underlying community conditions—including trusted leaders, organizations and groups that span dividing lines, productive norms of engagement, and a can-do narrative. When these conditions exist, a community can accelerate and deepen its progress.

This is the intentional strategy underway in Winchester and Clark County. It is producing results—both by addressing the issues that people care about and forging new underlying community conditions that enable change to take root, grow and spread.

This movement—from The Waiting Place to Catalytic—is enormous progress in such a short period of time. It is progress the community can take great pride in; it is something the community now needs to build upon.

Truth be told, most communities take a fundamentally different course, pursuing a set of activities that takes them in a direction that fails to produce the progress they hope for. This is what The Harwood Institute typically sees happening in communities across the country:

- Far too many community efforts overpromise and under-deliver, thus deepening people's sense of frustration, even cynicism, and leading to lost hope.
- Comprehensive plans get designed that are too big for a community to take on, and they fail to realistically take into account the capacities and needs of a community.
- Strategies are imposed upon communities from outside—lacking critical local context and undermining people's sense of local ownership.
- Large sums of money are expended long before anyone has a clear-eyed view of where investments are most needed and what it takes for those investments to succeed.

Over and over again, there is an unspoken assumption at work: You can “fix” a community and its problems. As if people and their community somehow need to be fixed. As if persistent issues of race and poverty can somehow be easily solved.

But no community nor its people can be fixed. Communities regenerate themselves by coming

together and marshaling their resources, often in unexpected ways. It is never possible to know exactly where people’s efforts will lead or what ripples they will create, but a community can be proactive about setting the right conditions for this emergence to occur. It is what The Harwood Institute calls “planned serendipity.” This approach is unfolding in Winchester and Clark County.

Seizing the Moment

The subtitle to *Waving the Community’s Flag* was “Winchester and Clark County’s Moment.” In the report’s preface, it states:

What this report shows is that, while this area has its share of problems, it has many strengths to build upon. Making progress—real progress—is doable and achievable if people come together to act.

The moment to do this is now.

The good news is this community is seizing the moment. People’s promising efforts reflect a call to action urged by a local man quoted in *Waving the Community’s Flag*: “Let’s work, not trying to wave our individual flag, but let’s wave our community flag. That’s what I think we’re missing.”

Now, more and more people are waving the community’s flag—taking one step at a time.



Photo © Michael Andrews

The Community Making Progress

2017

- Community efforts start and stop without explanation.
- The spread of drugs takes the lives of so many individuals and undermines so many more people’s lives.
- Intergenerational family breakdown leaves young people feeling abandoned.
- People see downtown as a living symbol of their frustrations—crumbling infrastructure, businesses that come and go, and repeated failed efforts.
- Deep divides keep the people and the community apart—from race and culture, to where people live, to old versus new residents, to religious factions.
- Too much negativity among residents leads to mistrust of many leaders.
- Fragmentation among leaders and organizations blocks effective action.
- A so-called “Good Ol’ Boys” network runs the community.
- A lack of genuine community discussion makes residents feel they cannot freely express themselves.

2019

- **Concrete actions, coming from different directions, focus on a variety of specific community challenges—all rooted in what matters to people.**
- **A growing network of leaders share a common purpose for working with the community and in support of one another.**
- **Downtown improves including stricter code enforcement, nuisance ordinance, infrastructure, and new small businesses.**
- **Groups and organizations form partnerships and collaborations to do work that none of them could do alone.**
- **Faith organizations cross dividing lines to work on youth and other issues and find ways to support each other.**
- **Blacks and whites come together to take courageous action on race, diversity, and inclusion.**
- **More youth become more engaged, and often lead adults in forging new connections and stories of hope.**
- **Taboo subjects are openly and productively discussed, such as drug addition, sexual orientation, homelessness, family breakdown, race, and others.**
- **A new can-do narrative starts to take hold.**

The Catalytic Role of The Greater Clark Foundation

In *One Step At A Time*, you will read about The Greater Clark Foundation. It is seldom the central actor, but it plays a critical role. Through its intentional approach to building a vibrant community, The Greater Clark Foundation demonstrates the indispensable role of being a community catalyst, connector, and convener.

The Greater Clark Foundation's mission is to make Clark County, Kentucky one of the best places in the country to live, work, and play. In 2013, the foundation adopted a strategy rooted in both the social determinants of health as well as the five forms of capital. Ambassador James Joseph, former CEO of the Council on Foundations, has written that effective philanthropic institutions deploy all of their assets, not just their capacity to make grants. In addition to their financial assets (termed financial capital), foundations possess important social, moral, intellectual, and reputational capital. The five forms of capital framework reflects the foundation's intentional approach to building the underpinnings of a strong, vibrant community. Everything the foundation does is a reflection of this framework. When you read *One Step At A Time*, you will see each of these elements at play.

Five Forms of Capital:

- **Social**—Utilizes networks and relationships to foster change
- **Moral**—Takes courageous, sometimes counter-cultural, positions on important issues
- **Intellectual**—Frames issues and disseminates information to illuminate challenges and possibilities

- **Reputational**—Changes the civic conversation about the future direction of the community
- **Financial**—Makes grants and program/mission-related investments to further North Star outcomes (long-term, sustainable growth)

In The Harwood Institute's 30 years of on-the-ground initiatives in communities, we have found that the likelihood for effective and sustainable progress is increased dramatically when organizations like The Greater Clark Foundation exist, step forward, and take courageous action. In *One Step At A Time*, you'll see The Greater Clark Foundation do this through a collection of actions that include What's Your Ambition?! Mini-Grants; hiring Linda Barrett, a Harwood Public Innovator, to be the part-time liaison for the public innovator group; commissioning the research and writing of *Waving the Community's Flag*; and the foundation's larger partnership with The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to help Clark County-area residents become better equipped to work together on moving the community forward.

No one action of The Greater Clark Foundation is enough to help catalyze a community. The difference is in the collection of these actions, their mutually reinforcing connections, and the momentum they help to create. Taken together, they are vital to gaining short-term wins and ensuring long-term sustainability of Winchester and Clark County's progress.

GLOSSARY

Below are terms and phrases from The Harwood Institute that are used throughout this report:



Photo © Michael Andrews

Turn Outward — An orientation toward the community that makes the community and not one's organization the reference point for innovation and change. It is literally the direction one chooses to face when working in communities.

Public Innovators Lab — A 2.5-day immersion in The Harwood Institute's practice of Turning Outward.

Public Innovator — Individuals who attend a Harwood Public Innovators Lab, who seek to make their efforts more relevant and impactful to the community.

Workspace — One-day engagements with public innovators to promote the cross-fertilization of ideas, opportunities for trouble-shooting and accelerate and deepen the application of the Turn Outward practice. Workspaces build and strengthen local networks of innovation and learning.

Harwood Coach — An individual certified by The Harwood Institute who is trained to support public innovators to adopt and adapt the Harwood practice of Turning Outward to their local context and work.

Shared Aspirations — These are the "North Star" for innovation and change in a community. Shared aspirations come from within people and are rooted in their lived experiences. They enable people to express what they are for, and to connect to something larger than themselves.

Community Conversations — 90-120-minute discussions about people's shared aspirations for the community, the concerns they hold, the actions they believe can make a difference in the community, and the leaders, organizations and groups they trust to take action.

"ASK" questions — A tool created by The Harwood Institute to engage individuals in quick three-to-seven-minute discussion about their aspirations for their community.

Stages of Community Life (Community Rhythms) — There are five stages of community life, and every community is in one of five stages. Each stage has fundamentally different implications for where a community is and how it can move forward.

Sweet Spot of Public Life — An approach to simultaneously addressing a specific issue in a community while building the necessary underlying conditions for change.

The Five Stages of Community Life

Winchester and Clark

County's Moment

The Waiting Place

There is an inkling that something is off in the community, but people can't name it. There's no agreement on issues, problems, or aspirations. A disconnect exists between leaders and community.

Impasse

The community is at loggerheads. There's clarity about "What's wrong," but little agreement on what to do. A lack of trust, leadership and organizational capacity block the community's ability to get things done.

Catalytic

There are pockets of change emerging, with new ways of working together. But a lack of trust, leadership and organizational capacity still plague the rest of the community. A new competition arises between an ingrained negative narrative and a new can-do narrative.

Growth

There is an abundance of community capacity, networks and productive norms for getting things done. Community-wide efforts are making progress.

Sustain and Renew

Clear progress has been made on key issues, but questions about "What's next?" are arising. Often there are underlying tensions on unresolved systemic issues. Tensions between old and new leaders exist.

In over 30 years of research and on-the-ground initiatives in communities across the United States and in other countries, The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation finds that change happens in stages over time. We have developed the Five Stages of Community Life framework that captures how this change happens and what it looks and feels like in a community. Each of the five stages has its own implications—do's and don'ts—for creating impact. By understanding which stage it is in, a community can develop strategies, programs and actions that fit its local context and can then work intentionally to accelerate and deepen positive progress.



The Five Stages of Community Life
 To learn more about the Stages of Community Life, see *Community Rhythms* by The Harwood Institute for the C. S. Mott Foundation



THE WINCHESTER AND CLARK COUNTY STORY

“I think I can say we are all dedicated to try and make our community a better place. And then, [to be] told that we are part of the problem was a very difficult thing for all of us to hear. And yet, we all knew it at some level.”

It is difficult to predict what will happen in January 2017, when Harwood Institute President and Founder Rich Harwood presents the *Waving the Community's Flag* findings to the community. When he stands up to speak, he tells a crowded auditorium that he refuses to sugarcoat the Institute's report, outlining a whole host of community challenges. He also states that to read the report as a glass-half-empty verdict is a mistake. This is “the community's moment,” he says, “to face up to its challenges, build on its strengths, and exert greater control over its shared future.”

He urges the crowd to hear the *whole* story. “While there is a generosity in this community,” Harwood says, “there is also a sense that not everyone feels seen and heard, that some people feel invisible, that there are divides that are holding this community back...[a] community that has divisions cannot move forward together.”

The next day, Harwood holds a separate meeting with a group of local church leaders from Winchester and Clark County. The report singles out religious denominations for competing with

each other over religious teachings and seeking to put people in seats, instead of helping unite the community to tackle its shared challenges. Harwood engages the ministers in a conversation about their standing in Winchester and Clark County and the opportunity they have to now lift up the community.

The gathering becomes tense at times. Several ministers use the meeting to defend their good works. But one pastor interjects, saying it is time for a “real” conversation about the churches' failings — both to the community and each other.

Jerry Johns, senior minister at First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in downtown Winchester, finds Harwood's tough talk “a bitter pill for all of us to swallow. I think I can say we are all dedicated to try and make our community a better place. And then, [to be] told that we are part of the problem was a very difficult thing for all of us to hear. And yet, we all knew it at some level.”

Three months later, Johns and several other pastors from the initial church group meeting are among the 77 residents who complete the

Photo © Michael Andrews

2.5-day Harwood Public Innovators Lab. Also, there are small business owners, retirees, high school students, educators, public officials, health care providers, nonprofit leaders and artisans. Many are not the usual people who regularly participate in Clark County's civic life.

The desire to shake up old patterns and to meet the community's challenges head-on motivates many of these people to attend the Lab. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves and contribute to strengthening the community.

At the Lab, the leaders learn new approaches about how they can help move the community forward. Most join teams to tackle various issues identified in *Waving the Community's Flag*, including downtown improvements, race and class, substance abuse and education. A group of five individuals sign up to focus on the environment, a topic not mentioned directly in the report. A leadership team from Calvary Christian Church has an idea to help address several divides in town. The Prichard Committee,

a statewide organization dedicated to improving Kentucky schools, makes the commitment to use the Harwood practice in its current work.

Jen Algire, the president and CEO of The Greater Clark Foundation, wants to find a way to support these leaders and nurture their newfound connections and enthusiasm. So, she comes up with the idea to hire a public innovator from the Lab, Linda Barrett, to be a part-time liaison for the group. Barrett now stays in touch with Lab attendees, encourages the use of the Harwood approaches and tools, plus helps to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Most of the people who go through the Lab are now working to strengthen the community and doing so in a different way. As Algire puts it, "These people are more willing to step out and take some risks than they would have otherwise been—more willing to stand firm in their beliefs and use their voice. People are recognizing their power—not waiting for someone to give them permission to act."

Early Wins in Health Care and Caring for People

One of the first public innovators to step forward and work differently is Candice Tackett—at the time the Patient Experience Director at Clark Regional Medical Center. Tackett's background is in behavioral therapy. She has lived in Winchester for two years but hasn't felt "it was really [her] community." In *Waving the Community's Flag*, newcomers often said they feel like outsiders in a town where families have made their home for generations.

During the Lab, Tackett identifies another form of exclusion: professionals who make decisions without talking to those they directly affect. She

wants to address this, but how? She finds the Lab helps her feel more confident in asking people how to change things. "When you're turning outward, I think you visualize things differently," Tackett says.

So, Tackett takes her newfound confidence and gets off to a fast start. In just the first month after the Lab, she holds four Community Conversations with patients, staff members, and community groups affiliated with the hospital. What she learns launches a series of actions and subsequent ripples that are still reverberating. The clearest finding from the Community

Conversations is people not feeling understood—literally. Spanish speakers have a difficult time communicating with hospital admissions personnel, nurses, and doctors, making everyone feel uncomfortable. One unfortunate example is a Hispanic man who suffered a heart attack—when he arrived at the emergency room, he experienced heightened anxiety because of the language barrier. This created a vital lag time in administering the treatment he needed.

Tackett's efforts produce a whole series of early wins—all critical to generating an important sense of momentum, especially when a community finds itself in *The Waiting Place*. The hospital makes its translation services more visible and accessible to patients, and admissions and other forms are translated into Spanish. Seeing these early wins, some hospital staff approach Tackett with additional ideas for the hearing-impaired, mentally challenged, and physically disabled patients. Before long, the facility purchases a text-enabled telephone, adds 12 new handicapped parking spaces, and a new motorized cart helps patients get from the lobby to different hospital departments.

Comments about the lack of racial and ethnic staff diversity also surface during the Community Conversations. Understanding the importance of emotional and cultural factors in providing quality care, Tackett realizes the hospital is behind the curve in its staff diversity. The hospital soon hires new staff members to close the gap. Clark Regional's staff now better represents the area's population, which is 10 percent minority, according to the 2010 Census.

Tackett also looks at the composition of her Patient Family Advisory Board, a group set up three years earlier to report on patient issues to the hospital board. It is largely white and middle-aged. So, she quickly adds two people in their twenties and makes the commitment to add high school students and people of color.

But as things progress, life intervenes—as it often does—Tackett gets pregnant with twins! When she returns from maternity leave some months later, the momentum she helped to create is taking on a life of its own. The hospital implements a Skype-based translation system called IRIS that handles a total of 200 languages. This effort starts with a single iPad on wheels, and then expands to four throughout the facility for staff members to use when speaking to people with different languages. The use of IRIS spreads to about two dozen of the hospital's clinics throughout the region, and then some doctors with hospital privileges begin using the system in their private clinics. Tackett takes heart that efforts to see and hear patients is paying off. "I think it's made a positive impact," Tackett says, "because [everyone] understands how much more the patient can be involved in their care and they actually understand what is going on."

“When you're turning outward, I think you visualize things differently.”



Photo © Michael Andrews

Local Surroundings Improve When People Work Together

Another group getting to work right after the Lab is the Environment Team, with the hope of bringing people together around preserving local lands. The team includes Rebecca Campomanes, Peggy Moody, Julie Kerber, Aaron Arnett, and his son Galen Arnett, a high school student. Some members of the group do not know each other well—an example of where new combinations of people in the community are coming together in new ways, to do new work.

Like Candice Tackett, the Environment Team starts to look for early wins. They focus on creating a booth at the Farmers' Market downtown; they'll return to the Farmers' Market a few times in the course of their work. It is a doable and achievable action that people in the community can see and take note of it.

But even before the Farmers' Market takes place, the team begins to talk among themselves, wondering if the word "environment" will attract others to join them. They want something more inspiring — something people can relate to. The team brainstorms a few name possibilities, eventually voting via text for Winchester Inspired by Nature, or WIN.

This is the first of several groups to change their name as they better understand and define the meaning of their work in the community. Naming will become important in these community efforts—from the issues people identify to the names of the groups doing the work. It signifies what matters and why.

The Saturday of WIN's first Farmers' Market is "Kids Day." The team offers crafts for children, and, importantly, "questions" for the adults. The questions are ones they learn at the Lab:

- What kind of community do you want to live in?
- Why is that important?
- How is that different from how you see things now?
- What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

In people's answers to these questions, they don't talk so much about the environment, but more about their larger surroundings: wanting the best of small-town life, where residents feel safe and people know and care about each other.

Acting on this knowledge, WIN members come up with the idea of weekly neighborhood walks to promote exercise and conversation. Mindful of Winchester's racial divide, the team deliberately chooses to walk from Heritage Park, used mostly by African Americans, to College Park, which is in a historically white neighborhood. The effort seeks to bring people together and address key underlying community concerns at the same time.

Watching the group of whites near his home, a black man starts to yell at them, expressing suspicion about why they are there. An African American woman nearby hears the shouting and invites the WIN members into her home. There, they meet her mother, a former hairdresser and prominent member of the community. The older woman gives them a tour of her home and spends a long time talking about her life in Winchester.

The WIN team believes they are on to something important, but aren't exactly sure how to capitalize on their inspiring visit. It isn't too long before they suspend the walks for lack of attendance, but the team will keep returning to the Farmers' Market, an annual event. They also keep meeting faithfully, twice a month at 7a.m. to look for their next substantial move.

The breakthrough comes when the team decides to hold three Community Conversations to learn more about what people in the community are thinking. What they learn is initially frustrating to them. Once again, no one brings up the word "environment," or even talks about preserving local lands. Instead, the Community Conversation

participants echo what the team heard at the Farmers' Market and what was in *Waving the Community's Flag*: Residents want a safe, drug-free community with a small-town atmosphere.

Another breakthrough comes when Linda Barrett, the Lab liaison hired by The Greater Clark Foundation, puts WIN team members in touch with an Education Team member who is gaining related insights from families at a back-to-school event. Both groups are learning many people in Winchester and Clark County fear using city parks because of drug needles strewn on the ground. This too is a significant message in *Waving the Community's Flag*.



Photo © Michael Andrews

So the WIN team makes another intentional choice. After thinking about what they are learning from the Community Conversations, they set out once more to better align their efforts with what people in the community are saying. Rather than sticking with what they had wanted to do, they act on what they are hearing as being important to the community.

This continual realignment to what matters to people in the community is a critical step to making progress. It builds people's civic confidence that they are being seen and heard and makes them feel part of the larger community. It helps to align resources and actions in the community. This is vital when seeking to move through The Waiting Place.

This clearer sense of purpose leads the WIN team to create a tagline to better reflect their efforts, "Connecting Neighbors Through Nature," along with a revised plan of action. The team starts to meet with a host of potential community partners to organize a spring picnic at College Park that will, as Campomanes puts it, "show neighbors they had agency and ownership of what went on in the park."

The spring picnic is based on three key goals: squarely addressing people's concerns about safety, giving neighbors around the park the opportunity to meet in a casual social setting, and learning more about the community.

In preparation, WIN shares what they are learning from their Community Conversations with the potential partners: Kara Davies at the preschool, members of the Burns Avenue Neighborhood Watch, Julie Maruskin at the Public Library, Gary Epperson at Emergency Management, Jeff Lewis of Parks and Recreation, Fire Chief Cathy Rigney, Police Chief Kevin Palmer and others. This is a critical approach they take from the Lab—by sharing the knowledge from the Community Conversations they can enlist new allies and align community action. And it works: most of those

they share the knowledge with step forward to join with WIN on the picnic.

During the meetings, the WIN team also learns something from the police chief they didn't know before. His department recently produced data on crime and other activities in local parks, suggesting conditions are better than people's perceptions.

Rather than simply announce these findings, and ask people to accept them, the WIN team invites neighbors to walk through the park before the picnic. They find no needles. WIN also wants neighbors to have their own conversations with officials on the subject at the College Park picnic. So, they invite police officers and firefighters to the picnic to mingle with residents. Both are important steps to helping to shift the old narrative about the park—through people's experience and evidence, not simply through attempts to "sell a new message."

In the meantime, Peggy Moody, Julie Kerber, and Rebecca Campomanes from WIN go door-to-door to invite local homeowners to the picnic. Music and food are the clear attractions.

WIN arranges for Kathy's Snack Shack food truck to be on-hand for concessions, Ale-8-One provides drinks, Jeff Lewis hauls jugs of water from the Parks and Rec building across the street. Gary Epperson, a musician, enlists others to help him provide entertainment. The library makes free seed packets for distribution. Campomanes brings in hundreds of pounds of rocks for kids and families to paint, Moody contributes tree saplings for distribution, and Aaron Arnett helps set everything up.

WIN also creates a welcoming Neighbors Connect banner and puts out large post-it sheets for people to publicly write down their aspirations for the community (living in a drug-free community continues to be the main theme). There are also materials from various organizations for distribution. The supplies are purchased with a What's Your Ambition?! grant from The Greater Clark Foundation.



Photo © Michael Andrews

One of the documents available at the picnic is the chief's report on local parks, which Julie Kerber talks about during an open mic period. Knowing the frequent complaints about a lack of information in Winchester—a theme also in *Waving the Community's Flag*—WIN makes sure to give other groups and individuals the opportunity to share what they are doing in the community.

The event is a huge success. Three hundred people turn out, stand in long food lines, chat with police officers, let their kids inspect the large fire truck parked in an adjacent lot, and sit on the ground enjoying the music. Kerber believes the picnic challenges the narrative that the park isn't safe. "I think for so many people to have a good experience in the park counters some of that." Campomanes, who lives in the neighborhood, says she is seeing a lot more people since then use College Park daily.

Knowing it is important to seize this moment of community success, Rebecca Campomanes writes an Op-Ed for *The Winchester Sun*, with the following conclusion:

"One of the sentiments I heard a lot was that people wished events like this could happen more often. They can. Clark County is full of passionate folks who are willing to put the time, money, and effort into bettering the community. Working together we can change the habits that make our community feel stagnant, ineffective, or plain old dead. All the individuals WIN talked to while organizing the

picnic contributed to its success. Whether you are a part of an organization or a neighbor who came out to enjoy the day, your role was essential to bettering Winchester. For that, you have all our deepest gratitude."

People in the community are now starting to notice WIN as a group of people who care about the community and focus on issues that matter in the community. After the picnic, other groups and residents contact WIN about projects they are passionate about. Campomanes writes in her Op-Ed that during the course of planning the picnic, they could see the ripple effects, including people banding together to pick up litter and mounting support for the Nuisance Ordinance, which is making its way for a vote at the City Commission.

Aaron Arnett of WIN is following the Nuisance Ordinance debate. His family lives downtown and the measure, talked about for years, includes something he and others dearly want: fines on landlords for repeated crimes tenants commit on their properties. Using WIN's mailing list of public innovators, picnic partners, and Community Conversation participants, Arnett urges people to go to city hall to get commissioners to vote yes during the second reading of the ordinance.

At the first reading, property owners comprised most of the audience, but during this second round, the public innovator-led group is there "to make sure that they knew that it was important to people."

The ordinance wins approval at the city level, adding more teeth to code enforcement downtown. "If nothing else," Arnett says, "It certainly put landowners on notice that they had to be paying attention to their tenants." Tracey Miller, from Leeds Theater in town, was among those who went to City Hall in support of the Nuisance Ordinance. A building with hourly rent "sleeping rooms" is right across the street from Leeds. She hopes this measure is a "game changer."

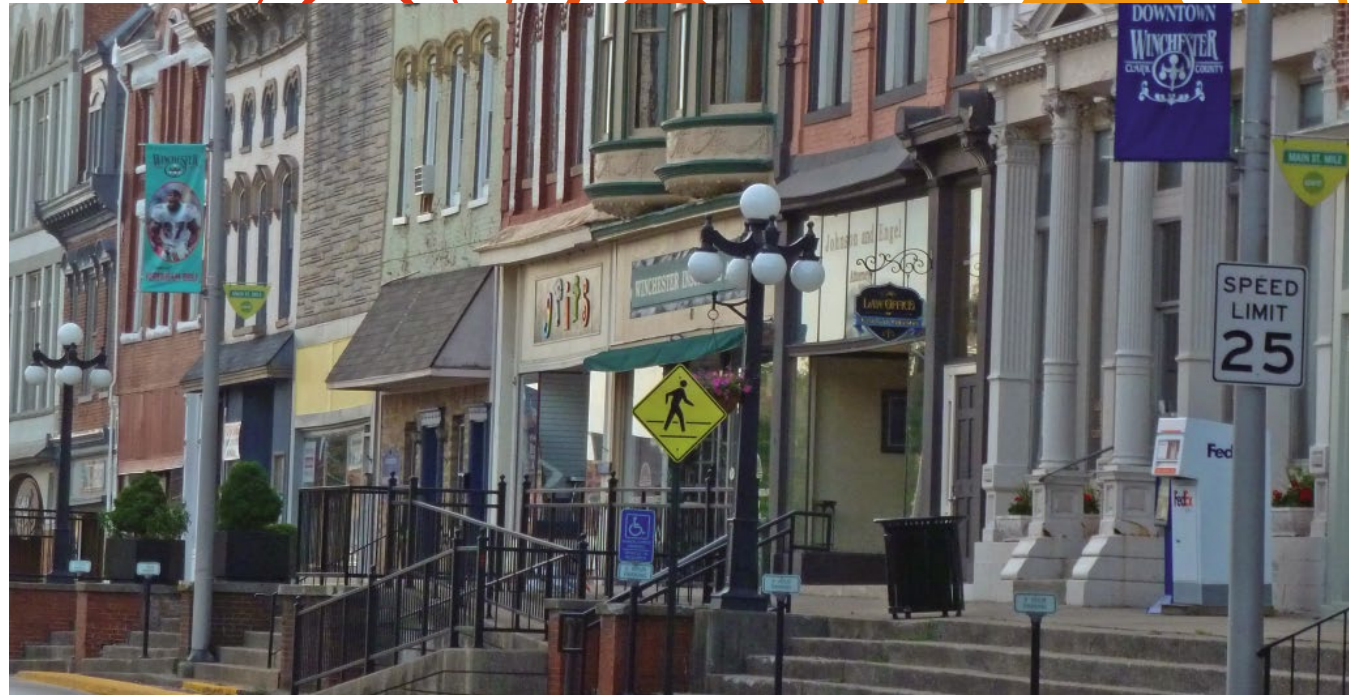


Photo © Michael Andrews

Rewarding Efforts Downtown

Downtown Winchester is called the heart and soul of the community, but according to *Waving the Community's Flag*, it is also a living symbol of the town's problems. Crumbling sidewalks and buildings, drug-dealing, and empty storefronts are all painful reminders of the town's more vibrant past. This prompts more than 20 Lab attendees to join the Downtown Team. It is the largest team to form at the Lab.

But after a few months, it becomes clear that there are different ideas among team members and no clear sense of direction. This often happens with efforts in communities in The Waiting Place. People agree to take on certain challenges, but there is little agreement about what to do. Enthusiasm wanes and people

fail to show up. What's more, the plans for action are often too big and complex. Smaller groups and more doable actions are likely to enjoy more success during this time.

One good example of such success occurs before the Lab. In 2015, The Greater Clark Foundation awarded Main Street Winchester a What's Your Ambition?! grant for the "Build a Better Block" project. The grant supports the creation of "pop-up" businesses for a single weekend. The Greater Clark Foundation also creates an event to announce the project and recruit volunteers. Residents not usually involved turn out and people are put to work sawing, hammering, decorating, and staffing temporary retail stores and restaurants in empty storefronts on North Main.

"The whole point of the project was to show people what downtown could look like on an everyday basis," says Rachel Alexander, Executive Director of Main Street Winchester. "You didn't have to imagine what downtown could be like if there was more investment, more shops, and more things to do. You got to see it and experience it."

Not long after the Build a Better Block project, Alexander attends her first Harwood Public Innovators Lab. She's part of a small group of local individuals The Greater Clark Foundation sends to a Lab being held in Alexandria, Va. to explore the idea of a partnership with The Harwood Institute. The team returns enthusiastic, and Turning Outward becomes an influential concept for Alexander. She applies the approach almost immediately to the Master Plan process she is launching.

As part of the planning process, Alexander sends out a Facebook invitation to the community that asks the Harwood questions: "What kind of community do you want to live in?" and "What do you want for downtown Winchester's future?"

The community's shared aspirations for the community and downtown are the foundation for a set of new strategies and actions. Part of the end product is a list of ten priority recommendations to address issues that were also raised in *Waving the Community's Flag*—everything from wanting improved code enforcement and public safety efforts to sidewalk repairs on the High Side of Main to upgraded housing downtown.

One of the many steps Main Street Winchester takes is to organize a Loft Tour, a Saturday event that is a sales pitch for further investment in downtown - as well as to bring people together socially, help them see changes downtown, and feel more a part of the potential of downtown.

Despite these different activities, there is a persistent, negative narrative that nothing will ever change. Main Street Winchester board

members, meanwhile, see their job as convincing people their negative views of downtown are simply wrong—it is a great and safe place to visit, shop, and start a business.

But trying to convince people to shift their views of downtown, especially given what they see and experience first-hand every day, takes more than "telling" them to change their minds or launching some new public relations messages. Such pronouncements often ring false to people if no new credible evidence is offered; they only contribute to greater frustration and cynicism as people suspect they are being sold a bill of goods. This is a critical mistake often made when communities seek to move forward.

Though Alexander feels she has enough insights from the Master Plan process and *Waving the Community's Flag* to inform her next steps, she keeps talking with residents through the use of Harwood's "ASK Questions" (four simple questions that come from the longer Community Conversations) and her regular, ongoing interactions with people. She continues to pick up variations on of "us vs. them" theme: the public versus the city, downtown businesses versus Main Street Winchester, the people who feel voiceless and disconnected versus the people who are perceived to be in power. This is hardly what her board wants to hear or project publicly about downtown.

The shared aspirations for the community and downtown are the foundation for a set of new strategies and actions.

What emerges for Alexander is a journey in discovering a more authentic narrative about downtown that is firmly rooted in and reflects people's reality. The Harwood Institute has learned that for a community to make progress, it must come to tell a different story about itself; but that story must be based on actual positive changes emerging from the community that inspire authentic hope.

This is where Alexander lands. She says, "I think that's something we've been working on—trying to give a more authentic picture of downtown. We're not only talking about the accomplishments, though we are very proud of the positive momentum we've been building and the increased investment in downtown. We also acknowledge that we still have tensions downtown. We still have issues. There is work to do. Concentrating on a more rounded picture has really helped move the narrative forward for us."

At this point, some of the projects in Main Street Winchester's Master Plan are still three to five

years off, but improvements in code enforcement and new outdoor dining regulations can be counted among early wins.

And the wins keep coming. Beyond the two people now tasked with code enforcement—a city worker and a police officer—the Build a Better Block weekend afforded community members the opportunity to build something together and generate early momentum for new investments. Thirty rehab projects have been started or completed in the past four years, from roof replacements to total overhauls. Investment downtown now totals \$7 million annually, compared with \$600,000 in 2015. There is new development up and down Main Street.

In 2018, in recognition of their accomplishments, Main Street Kentucky gives Alexander and her local group three of the eight top Main Street Kentucky awards. Winchester residents still complain about downtown and its prospects, but a new positive story is slowly emerging based on real, tangible results.

New Hope through the Arts

One thriving enterprise on North Main Street is Leeds Center for the Arts. When Tracey Miller becomes its board president more than four years earlier, Leeds is struggling to survive. The Center is \$22,000 in debt and has \$400 in the bank and a building with a damaged roof and no heat.

Today, Leeds puts on over 50 events per year in a renovated space with ticket sales of \$155,000 annually. It is a regional arts draw and local

economic driver. It offers diverse programming that not only produces good art, but also actively generates impact, change, and conversation about meaningful issues.

At the time of the Lab, Miller is feeling lonely in this mission. She attends the Lab with her then vice-president, Selina Arnett, and while there, connects with people she doesn't know and leaves with new support outside the theater doors.



Photo © Michael Andrews

Speaking about her Lab experience, Miller says, "I think the biggest impact for me has been the hopefulness that it's created in our community and between these innovators. It's just that ability to help one another and to know there are other people in this community who care."

Miller is now working with Pastor Marvin King, a prominent African American pastor at the First Baptist Church, and Kelly Hutchens, a massage therapist, both of whom share Miller's desire to confront racial inequality.

Here's the backstory on how they started working together. Not long after the Lab, Miller is leaving lunch downtown with friends and spots a pick-up truck sporting two Confederate flags. The confluence of the training, her new community relationships, and this incident sparks a new programming idea: mount a production of *Hairspray*.

Frequently viewed as a "bubble gum musical," according to Miller, *Hairspray* has a lot of poignant things to say about race. The cast of the play includes a number of young people, so this is also an opportunity to engage local and regional students and adults in the production. In addition to regularly scheduled performances, the students also perform a few numbers outdoors for the community. Miller also adds a new feature for Leeds: a post-performance discussion about the play's themes, led by Pastor King. In short, the play becomes a chance to openly highlight and discuss underlying issues of race in the community, while also making students more visible.

The play and other strategic activities produce other important ripples, too. Black residents gradually begin attending more performances at the theater, which was once segregated, and 30-to-40 percent of the students who audition for Leeds's popular youth productions are African American. Miller also partners with Pastor King to offer improv classes for children in his church's reading readiness program, designed to boost self-esteem.

Attendance is low and only children from the church go. The effort demonstrates a good idea, but more work on building black-white connections and trust remain.

Miller views Leeds as a safe and “sacred space” for kids, many of whom suffer from personal and family trauma. Serving young people and developing them as performers and leaders is a long-standing goal of Leeds, so much so that Leeds created a Youth Advisory Board several years ago. Galen Arnett from WIN is a member of it, and so too are Miller’s daughters Ellie and Tessa, who join her at the Lab.

Inspired by the positive results from *Hairspray*, the next year Leeds presents the theater’s most impactful and original show ever, *Outside Our Doors*. Leeds receives a What’s Your Ambition?! grant from The Greater Clark Foundation to write and produce the drama.

The Youth Advisory Board works with the playwright to bring to stage the distressing words of local African Americans, gay men and women, individuals suffering from addiction, and survivors of family violence. The play challenges Winchester residents to truly see and hear community members from all walks of life.

Black residents gradually begin attending more performances at the theater, which was once segregated, and 30-to-40 percent of the students who audition for Leeds’s popular youth productions are African American

Youth Advisory Board member Galen Arnett is one of the play’s actors, portraying someone he knows—a local gay teen feeling pressure to conform. “He talked to me afterwards and said that seeing his story represented in a small town where not everyone would accept him made an impact on him.”

Ellie Miller observes those whose lives are dramatized in the play feel “more empowered,” adding that the production also “changed the lives” of the teens on the Leeds youth board. They begin volunteering at various nonprofits after Tracey Miller invites representatives from several groups to talk to the students about the social issues being depicted on-stage. Miller wants the theater kids to appreciate that there are people in the community hard at work on solutions.

One example of the Youth Advisory Board’s burst of volunteerism is when students express an interest in helping Marvin King’s First Baptist Church with its summer movie series. “So, [First Baptist] did a showing of *Black Panther* in Heritage Park, and the youth board kids did face painting,” Ellie Miller explained. “That came about after *Outside Our Doors*.”



“He talked to me afterwards and said that seeing his story represented in a small town where not everyone would accept him made an impact on him.”

The production also makes an impact on Galen, Ellie, and Tessa, reinforcing what they learned during the Lab about Turning Outward. Galen Arnett says participating in the piece helps his understanding of people and confirms the value of listening to people’s stories. For Ellie Miller, the power of the arts to create change becomes real. The experience leaves Tessa Miller feeling the advisory group’s focus is shifting to creating impact.

As for Tracey Miller, “It was one of the most emotional walks I’ve ever had in my life, to walk through that show every night and watch it come back at me. I think the most important part for me is that it created 22 kids who will not look at a drug addict or a homeless person and go, ‘Oh, it’s their fault.’”

While about 20 people do walk out during different performances, Miller reports it was worth it because of the “good” the drama is doing for everyone associated with it. *Outside Our Doors* creates trust in the gay community, and a dialogue in the black community about homosexuality. It is providing another valuable forum to talk about race.

People who know Leeds Center for the Arts are noticing a difference in the theater since the Lab. Before, there was more of an emphasis on filling theater seats; now, there is more intentional action to engage the larger community outside the walls of the theatre. Before Miller felt alone in her mission; now, the theatre is building relationships with other public innovators and groups in the community.

The theater is also booking more performers who appeal to the African American community, including a gospel group during the annual Pioneer Festival. And Leeds brought Linkin’ Bridge, a popular Louisville a cappella group made famous by an exceptional run on “America’s Got Talent,” to perform at the theater and the high school. The public innovator network supports both these efforts, The Greater Clark Foundation provides a What’s Your Ambition?! grant, and the hospital signs on as well.

Courageous Movement on Race and Inclusion

Just a few months after the Lab, the Race and Class group also wants to find a more inspiring name, especially with Leeds Theatre's production of *Hairspray* coming up, and with group member Pastor Marvin King playing a key role in the production. Team members feel "Race and Class" doesn't do justice to their mission of seeking greater diversity and inclusion in Winchester and Clark County. The new name they pick is the Multicultural Alliance.

Then, after a year of working together, the team begins to see themselves as something even more: connectors. They aspire to shift the spotlight to people not typically seen nor heard in the community, help them become more visible, and build greater relationships between and among different groups in the community. This leads the team to change its name once more, to Better Together Winchester, or BTW. The new mission statement makes BTW's intentions clear:

"As a path to positive change, Better Together Winchester will facilitate opportunities for civil engagements that build inclusive relationships and foster equity and a sense of belonging across our community."

Pastor King puts it this way:

"It's so much bigger than race. The broader issue is a respect for humanity, and to help people appreciate the value that every human being in our community brings to the table."

As the team's sense of purpose evolves, BTW's white members are increasingly examining their own assumptions and attitudes on race. They



look to Pastor King to lead them in a process of self-examination. He declines. He explains that white people frequently turn to African Americans to educate them about race. Pastor King instead provides the team with a list of recommended books and other materials to pursue on their own. What follows is a series of uncomfortable conversations about whites' collective position of privilege and power that the team members themselves need to reckon with—to name, to acknowledge, to own.

"It was an aha moment!" according to Becky Farmer. "We were all off-base" about why black people do not trust whites. Kelly Hutchens describes her evolution in this way: "I was in a bubble, now I'm not. I look at everything through multiple lenses now and try to see the potential implications before I act or speak."

Mary T. Yeiser, Mark McCammish, and several other members of Emmanuel Episcopal Church are also part of the core group—the eight to ten people who regularly attend BTW meetings and share in its leadership. One outing in particular, makes an impression on team members—a trip

the group takes to Lexington to watch the movie *Black Panther*. Afterwards, the mixed group of blacks and whites go to a local coffee shop to discuss the messages of empowerment in the film, especially for black men. They decide to go together on periodic lunch dates at local Winchester restaurants so blacks and whites in town see them socializing in public—a rarity the members want to change. Some of these outings draw stares and comments from various onlookers. This doesn't deter the team.

In an article in *The Winchester Sun*, Mark McCammish writes he is learning two things from these public and private experiences. "First, black folks can't end racism. Only white folks can do that. Second, the best place to do that is in a faith setting." McCammish adds, "I firmly believe that it should be a primary mission of white churches to actively work to end racism." Some say many houses of worship in Clark County have yet to acknowledge and take on this mission.

During the summer 2018, members of BTW work to identify what they are learning from their own engagements and how they can engage the broader community in these discussions. Local politics becomes one arena they hope to impact. They want to provide voters with more in-depth information about local concerns and candidates, and to address underlying issues of inclusion and diversity. The primary election that took place months earlier, in May, yielded little discussion of community concerns other than the typical political back-and-forth debate.

BTW decides to sponsor a candidate forum of their own to give voters greater access to those running for office. As news of the event spreads, the public innovators start to feel pushback from the established "old guard" about their intentions. Despite any nervousness, the team keeps moving ahead. They set two main goals: focus political discourse on issues that matter to the community and ensure that all people in the community have easy access to the discussion.

They focus their efforts on Winchester's contested races, inviting candidates for Mayor, County Judge-Executive, County Magistrate, County Attorney, Jailer, City Commission, State Representative, State Senator, and School Board. Twenty-four candidates respond and will attend. Before the forum, each candidate is asked to sign an agreement pledging to limit their remarks to two minutes and to treat the moderators and their political opponents with "civility and respect."

This attitude and approach are not the prevailing norm in Clark County, especially when people of color seek to be seen and heard. Changing political behavior around inclusion is a central goal of BTW. "There was one critical thing we observed about norms and systemic marginalization," according to Pastor King. "Forums often were held in a location that was not readily accessible or felt comfortable for the marginalized population of Winchester to attend." The remedy this time is to hold the candidate forum at Pastor King's First Baptist Church.

The forum is driven by questions arising from the *Waving the Community's Flag* report, while organizers also ask residents to submit questions. The questions are given to the candidates in advance as a signal the group expects thoughtful answers. Topics include substance abuse, code enforcement, economic disparity, and equal opportunity to community services.

"It's so much bigger than race. The broader issue is a respect for humanity, and to help people appreciate the value that every human being in our community brings to the table."

Parishioners at First Baptist warmly welcome the diverse crowd of about 200 people. Pastor King and Mary T. Yeiser co-moderate. A local television station and *The Winchester Sun* cover the forum and the newspaper live streams the event, which receives more than 3,400 hits. Rebecca Campomanes of WIN monitors the feed and answers people's questions in real time. Other WIN team members volunteer as well, including Julie Kerber and Peggy Moody, now a regular at BTW meetings. As Kerber explains it, "It's about community, and what one innovator is doing, we're all doing."

Retired firefighter Ramsey Flynn is one of the candidates at the forum. He is a Lab attendee and feels the best contribution he can make to the community is to run for a City Commission seat. During his campaign, he was advised not to talk about "change." But the *Waving the Community's Flag* report and his own door-to-door conversations with potential voters convinces him that a lot of people, especially younger ones and people of color, feel an urgency for change in the community.

Flynn seeks African American support at BTW's candidate forum. "At that forum I made one promise, and it was to get the 7th Street Project pushed, and let's get it done," Flynn observes. For decades, black residents had complained about semi-truck traffic from a nearby industrial plant going through the narrow residential streets of their neighborhood. But despite efforts to stop the traffic, nothing ever happened. On Election Night, Flynn edges out an incumbent, who has served on the Commission for 26 years, by 340 votes. He becomes its youngest member.

At the first monthly meeting in January after taking office in early 2019, Flynn starts the discussion to secure a resolution in support of re-routing trucks away from 7th Street, which will cost about \$4 million. Since the first meeting, a resolution was requested by a fellow Commissioner to be written and sent to the

state transportation for the project, and the City Commission has voted unanimously to begin securing the necessary rights-of-way for the project. There is no vote on funds, but he argues this first step is long overdue and a win. He adds, "Why hasn't it happened over the past 30 years? But now times have changed, there's new leadership, and it's coming."

Working with other commissioners, Flynn is seeking to place other delayed or avoided issues on the agenda, and there is already one victory. The City Commission approves an ordinance making the city responsible for repairing and replacing some of the sidewalks downtown instead of property owners.

“I’m all about putting the elephant in the room. If you don’t know it, you can’t fix it.”

Flynn is also pressing for new norms on the Commission. He holds a working session on code enforcement, something never done before with a current program. He is encouraging greater transparency on the Commission and urging members of the public to attend meetings and speak out, which amounts to a reversal of the "don't step on people's toes" norm described in *Waving the Community's Flag*.

"I'm just all about putting the elephant in the room," he explains. "If you don't know it, you can't fix it . . . if it was my best friend and he had a building falling down, we'd have a talk."

In 2019, after the candidate forum and Flynn's election, another significant partnership involving

race and diversity starts to bubble up. It's actually an idea others have tried to move forward in the past, but with little movement. The idea comes from Jennifer Gulley, the nurse administrator with the Clark County Health Department, who attends an Implicit Bias workshop in Lexington. With public health accreditation and staff training needs in mind, she is there to audition the training as well as the trainer.

Gulley was impacted by the experience and believes Winchester can benefit from the training and from the instructor, Pastor Edward Palmer, a certified diversity trainer from Radcliff, Kentucky. She contacts Kelly Hutchens from Better Together Winchester, whom she got to know in the run-up to *Outside Our Doors*, and the women meet with Linda Barrett from The Greater Clark Foundation and Candice Tackett from Clark Regional Medical Center.

As with other efforts, this one also involves a cross-section of individuals and teams from the public innovator network.

When the four women meet, they talk about doing a single event. But when they take the idea back to their respective organizations, something even more ambitious evolves: support for a collaboration on a longer-term learning journey, bucking Winchester's habit of working in silos and hoping for quick fixes.

Working with Pastor Palmer, the group divides the training into four distinct parts, extending the workshops throughout 2019. The first two meetings cover implicit bias and avoiding cultural collisions. The next two focus on understanding race and systems of racism and how to apply the training to people's work and lives. The partners also schedule multiple meetings for each training topic; this way, they can draw in as many residents as possible and help the community surface, discuss, and act on its class and racial divides. Nearly 250 people attend the first workshop, including a variety of notable public officials.

Some discussions are intense. Mary T. Yeiser recalls one session: "White people were talking mostly about how their families had black help and treated them like one of the family. Then Pastor Palmer commented, 'I suspect they had a different view of how they were treated or how they felt.' What I realized then was that white people just have a real ignorance about how our actions are perceived by and impact blacks in our community."

A surprise to Becky Farmer is that many of the white men in attendance openly talk about difficult topics and are empathic throughout the workshop and women in attendance openly weep. A few people ask Farmer why more black residents did not come. Maybe five or six show up for the first session and there are one or two throughout other sessions. She replies, "Like Marvin [King] said, when there's no relationship and there's no trust, and given the whole history and treatment, why would some show up? We all need to understand this better."

Not many church leaders come either; their absence is noticed, too. Farmer says several members of BTW went to an Association of Churches meeting to make a personal appeal to ministers to attend the sessions. Jennifer Gulley from the Health Department was there too. As a community health improvement planning coordinator, she was making the case that to improve health outcomes, we must seek to understand and address the social conditions in which people live and these sessions were a step in that direction. Three pastors, all of whom are public innovators, attend the second workshop on avoiding cultural collisions.

All in all, the training is a gratifying beginning. From Jen Algire, president and CEO of The Greater Clark Foundation:

"[We've] been wanting to do this focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion for several years, and so you suddenly have these four public innovators that were willing to take

this on. I'm talking about Jennifer Gulley, Candice Tackett, and the Better Together group—Kelly [Hutchens] and Becky [Farmer] in particular. Not only did these people step up, but, also, they brought their organizations with them. That tells me everything I need to know about how the community readiness for the conversation has evolved. Four or five years ago, even if those same four people had stepped up, they would not have been able to bring their organizations with them."

At around the same time as the training, another important ripple focuses on inclusion and belonging. The thought-provoking public art display, "I Was Here," comes to Winchester. The display features 23 "Ancestral Spirit Portraits" that both create memorials to those who were sold into slavery and engages people to think beyond 'who we were' into a vision of 'who we could be' as fellow citizens. The collaboration between artist Marjorie Guyon and photographer Patrick J. Mitchell made its debut in Lexington near the site of one of America's largest slave markets, and Winchester is the first community to host the traveling exhibition.

The large portraits cover downtown windows to call attention to Winchester's own history of slavery and its current racial divides. BTW members, other public innovators and community residents all take

part in an "on-the-street museum walk," which culminates in a community conversation at Leeds Theater.

Clark County's own history with slavery inspired an offshoot of "I Was Here" called "Of Thee, I Sing". Clark County residents—rich and poor, black and white, city and county—will become Hannah and Daniel, an enslaved woman and her bi-racial son who was sold at the age of seven on the steps of the Clark County Courthouse. Their collaged portraits help people to re-see themselves and their neighbors through a lived experience of empathy and compassion. It is a visual representation of 'who we could be'—trusted and beloved. The power of Clark County's story—of century-old wounds from slavery, racism, and segregation—is also America's story.

The initiative is funded by The Greater Clark Foundation, Clark County Community Foundation, and Wells Fargo; the three organizations that had not formally worked together before.

In a press release announcing the project, Jen Algire stated, "The wounds of slavery are real. Healing these wounds requires naming and acknowledging those things that have kept us from truly fulfilling the vision of an America in which all are created equal."

"persistent parochialism across many churches . . . regardless of race . . . looking out after their own flocks." The other concern is about children and teens in Clark County and the family breakdown causing so much pain and social upheaval.

McCormick thinks the best way to knock down barriers in all three of these areas is to focus on youth. Plus, there is a new problem in the community he feels needs urgent attention: "The YMCA closed its doors," McCormick reports. "About 400 kids were playing basketball there, and there was going to be nowhere for those kids to go."

Churches, including his own, have gym space and he has long been interested in a sports ministry, but did not want to compete with the Y. Now, the Y's closing creates a need, and he is ready to fill it.

But something is changing in McCormick as a result of *Waving the Community's Flag* and his Lab experience: a recognition that he cannot do

this work alone. As he puts it, "I would've never thought initially about partnering with others. I was just thinking essentially, 'How can I grow my own church, right? How can I reach more people?'" Now, he chooses a decidedly different course of action, not only to help local kids, but to spark a whole constellation of additional ripple effects in the community.

The Calvary Christian ministers have a goal in mind: to learn strategies that will help the church partners—Calvary Christian, Christview Christian Church, First Church of God, Central Baptist Church, and Pastor King's First Baptist Church—become a successful franchise of Upward Sports. According to its website, Upward Sports "develops the total athlete mentally, athletically, spiritually and socially." Individual churches start leagues around the country. Rarely had Upward Sports seen this level of collaboration. They soon take notice.

During the lab, McCormick connects with fellow public innovators who are potential donors.

Photo © Michael Andrews



Crossing Divides to Support Youth

Mike McCormick, lead pastor at Calvary Christian Church in Winchester, also has race relations on his mind when he attends the Lab with members of his staff, Assistant Pastor Steve Crosby and Celebrate Recovery Minister Dickie Everman. In the wake of widely publicized police shootings nationwide, McCormick's church and four other churches within the local

Association of Churches are praying about how to improve racial tensions in Winchester.

McCormick holds concerns about two other divisions in the community as well. One highlighted in *Waving the Community's Flag* involves churches themselves. There are fractures within and between congregations, and, according to the report, a

Financial support eventually comes from a variety of community sources, including corporations and The Greater Clark Foundation, which awarded Upward Sports a What's Your Ambition?! grant.

McCormick also meets with School Superintendent Paul Christy during the Lab and invites him to speak at the partner churches about the district's data on the state of family life in Clark County. Christy then turns around and offers McCormick the opportunity to address school assemblies across the district to recruit students for Upward Sports. This allows McCormick to meet and learn more about the kids who want to play basketball. Many of them are poor. Part of the Upward team's first discussion, according to director Kyle Raney, is "How are we going to handle the social-economic divide in the community? The decision is made to offer scholarships."



The intentional choice to underwrite disadvantaged students indicates how the Lab and subsequent Harwood coaching changes the nature of the work McCormick's team is undertaking. First, they understood the importance to be a good steward of the public insights in *Waving the Community's Flag*, so the group communicates the message that Upward Sports teams will expressly work to address the county's class and race divides. The "stages of community life" also proves to be a valuable concept, enabling McCormick and his leadership group to locate Winchester in The Waiting Place. This keeps them from "over-programming things too quickly and trying to control it from one perspective." They need to start small and grow from there.

Then there is the issue of trust. "It was a really important community condition that we needed to address," according to McCormick. "There was a lack of trust of leadership in our community." Bringing the different churches together, the school district, and others are all critical down payments on building greater trust in the community.

When the 2017-2018 basketball season begins, Upward 40391 (Winchester's zip code) enrolls 861 students, subsidizing the \$55 entry fee for nearly 400 of them. They attract twice the number of students who once played basketball at the Y. As already noted, enhancing diversity and touching more of the entire community is a focal point for Upward Sports. According to McCormick, "This whole thing is really not about basketball at all. It's really about community transformation. We want to be hope dealers." He continues, "There are a lot of drug problems in our town. There are a lot of opioid dealers, but we want to be dealers of hope."

The team feels good about its first season. McCormick hears from many others in the community that the church collaboration is unique; it has not been seen in Clark County before. Blacks and whites, rich and poor, are in each other's churches and gyms, driving into neighborhoods they previously hadn't visited. Coaches and referees are working across traditional divides of race, class, and denominations. There are integrated cheerleading squads. Players with disabilities take the court with the support of new friends they otherwise may not have known.

McCormick is staying in touch with the Upward Sports national office about the local league's progress; then he receives unexpected word from headquarters. They want to send a crew to Winchester to produce a video about their first-year success. "Upward actually told us [that] a few years ago they discouraged people from partnering, because it just got too complicated. It was too complex," McCormick said. "Now, having seen us and a few others, they're actually shifting their recommendation to have churches

work together and partner. They're seeing a different level of impact that's happening."

Here are excerpts from the video Upward 40391 showed at its banquet in early 2018:

Mike McCormick: *"The view of our community from people in the community is that our kids have no hope, our churches . . . weren't interested in ministering beyond their own congregations."*

Marvin King: *"Through sports ministry, it gave the churches an opportunity to . . . come together for a common goal and mission."*

Kyle Raney, director of Upward 40391: *"We're starting to see a lot of impact in our community since we brought Upward along here. We have a lot of kids involved, and not only are those kids involved but you also have all those kids' families involved."*

Younger boy wearing protective glasses: *"Upward means everything to me. I've met a bunch of new friends this year and have been having a lot of fun on and off the court."*

A mother: *"I know that my kids are going to be . . . taught life lessons and how to deal with those life lessons in the right way."*

The banquet and video gave Upward 40391 the opportunity to celebrate its achievement just one year following the Lab. The team is working diligently in what The Harwood Institute calls the "Sweet Spot of Public Life," taking steps to address specific community issues and creating the underlying conditions that enable the community to get things done. Upward is squarely facing the community's concerns about youth and families, religious, and race and class divides. Simultaneously, the team is consciously forging new relationships, developing new leaders and challenging old negative habits and norms. In gearing up for the 2018-2019 basketball

season word spreads about Upward 40391. Enrollment jumps from 861 to 940. The church partnership expands from five to eight churches.

But one of the new partners is experiencing a major problem: Christ Church of Winchester needs a new floor. The cost is a staggering \$28,000. With extra repairs, the total climbs to between \$35,000 and \$40,000. This leads to another unprecedented move in the town's religious community. Several pastors go to their congregations and ask them to help pay for Christ Church's gym floor renovation.

First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), downtown, steps forward. Jerry Johns, Senior Minister, explains: "They said they needed \$15,000, so I went back to First Christian Church and I said, 'I can't believe I'm going to ask you to do this, but would you mind giving an offering for another church?'" His congregation said yes, along with the Winchester Clark County Association of Churches, Winchester Covenant Church, Fellowship of Believers Church, First Church of God, First Christian Church, Calvary Christian Church, and Central Baptist Church. Together they raised \$12,000. The new floor is ready in time for the second season.

According to Jeff Gaines, the pastor at Christ Church, "Everybody got together, pooled resources and energies—networking, connecting. In three weeks, we went from not having a space to host games, to having a beautiful space to host games." His church alone hosts an average of 350 people each Saturday during the second season, sparking a sense of optimism about what else churches can do for the community.

"We are so much stronger when we are together, and it continues to motivate all of these church boards. So now you go back to your church and say, 'We impacted a thousand students this year, and their families. This is a no-brainer for that next thing. We've got a lot of opportunities coming up.'"

Schools Turn Outward

Superintendent Paul Christy also knows about the difficulty many cash-strapped families are facing in Clark County. Standing in line behind a mother at a local discount store one day, he hears her complain about the high cost of the school supplies. The experience leads Christy to ask the school board to add money to the budget for supplies so parents, guardians and teachers don't have to pay themselves. The district then goes on to provide breakfast and lunch for all students at every school to ensure hunger is not a barrier for any student.

Still, coming into the Lab, Christy is troubled by a persistent disconnect between the district and community: his concern is that communications with parents is largely one-way. He brings several staff members to the Lab with him, and they, joining a fairly large group of residents, form the Education Team. But the team doesn't work out.

Meanwhile, as Christy works to bring along his internal team, he looks externally to bring about more immediate progress. His growing relationship with Mike McCormick and Upward Sports is one example. It is a partnership many other school superintendents might be reluctant to enter, as it is started and driven by a community group and not the school. But Christy keeps the relationship going.

Presenting the data to the churches about Clark County families "opened the door to a lot of understanding to some of the difficulties" with kids, Christy reports, highlighting the fact many grandparents and other relatives are raising our students. This leads to forming a new community support group, Relatives as Parents, which meets at the central district office. As word spreads

about the new effort, more and more people attend the sessions.

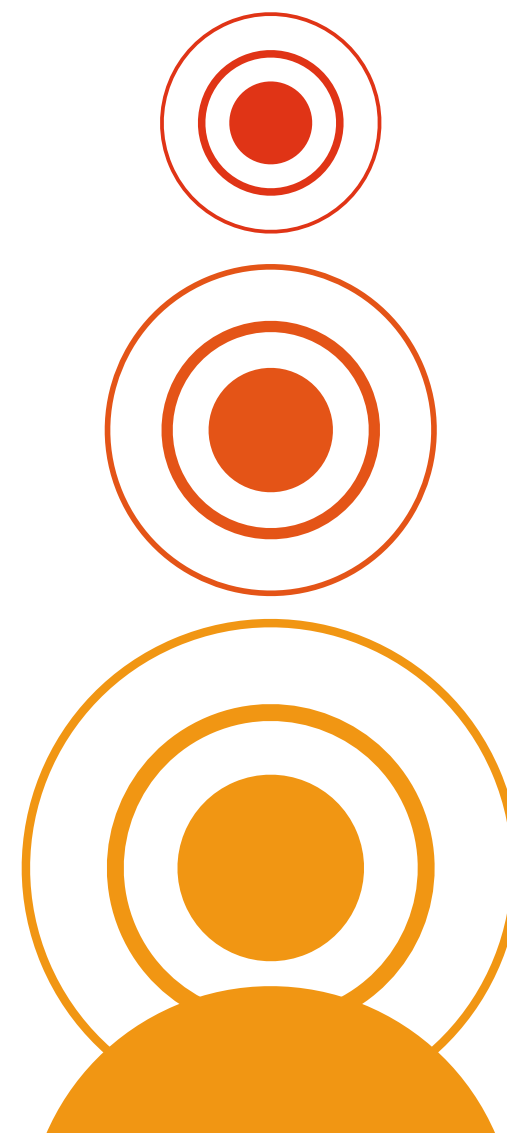
Christy and some staff members also take part in a series of student conversations that originate with Clark County Community Foundation's "On The Table" program, which provides the format for these discussions. According to *Waving the Community's Flag*, many kids in town feel abandoned.

According to Christy, "We're now putting student groups together and talking with them about issues and how they feel about those. We're having candid conversations and not just saying, 'Okay'" and then moving on. Administrators actively work with students to set realistic expectations about what can be done, he adds, with the goal of keeping the lines of communication open. Once again, the building of trust is at the center of the work."

Based on these conversations, one step Campbell Junior High takes is to place wooden mailboxes, made by shop students, around the school so kids can leave comments and questions. A school administrator meets with students monthly to address their concerns.

A topic that is coming up repeatedly in the student conversations is "safety." This initially leads school administrators to conclude they need more hard security measures in schools, like metal detectors and additional police officers. But the conversations unearth a different understanding about what students really mean by the call for "safety." Much of it, in truth, concerns bullying. An entirely different response is needed.

Deeper public listening, new programs, and different interactions with students are now taking place.



So the district increases the number of police officers in schools, but "not so much for the point of having an armed officer there," Christy says, "but having an officer there to work on relationships with kids. We actually have kids now that are asking, 'Can you send a certain Resource Officer? [He] was in middle school with me, and I'd like to talk to him.'" The district also doubles its mental health staff and signs up for a statewide anti-bullying program called Stop. An anonymous tip line goes directly to the Kentucky Center for School Safety, which communicates incidents back to schools and follows up to make sure they are discussed and resolved.

Deeper public listening, new programs, and different interactions with students are now taking place. But like Mike McCormick, Campbell Principal Dustin Howard wants something more: transformation. "My goal was to get the community in our building, and if not, get our kids in the community doing positive things to redefine what people thought of our students."

Campbell is a relatively new junior high after a district-wide restructuring closes some schools and consolidates others. Howard has a reputation for being a fearless advocate for kids. He aspires to create an atmosphere of trust and respect on his staff. Learning about the significance of Turning Outward at the Lab reminds him of just how much he wants to engage with the community. While understanding and valuing public support, "sometimes we get lost in the day-to-day, it's almost like an afterthought," he says.

Just before the 2018-2019 school year begins, Paul Christy, Dustin Howard, Mike McCormick, and Linda Barrett meet with Harwood coaches to see if there is a way to pilot more year-round community support for Campbell students. It's an idea that could eventually spread to other Clark County campuses.

At the meeting, Howard talks about the Amazing Shake, a national student-development program

that is up and running in nearby Mason County. Howard, a few staff members, and Mike McCormick go on a field trip shortly afterward to check it out. It impresses them. The Amazing Shake teaches students soft skills, including how to do a proper handshake, exposes them to community-service projects, and puts them on the spot in simulated high-pressure situations during a final Gauntlet round. Howard and his team decide they want it for Campbell. The program is a good vehicle for developing student leadership and catalyzing more internal change.

In the first year, the program exceeds all expectations. Under the direction of Social Studies teacher Leah Adams and Language Arts teacher Amber Murphy, their 7th grade students learn about professionalism, manners, problem solving and public speaking—skills business leaders have identified as lacking in Clark County youth.

Then, three Campbell students (including two kids involved with Leeds Theatre) advance to the 2019 national Amazing Shake competition in Atlanta. The school board funds their travel. For 13-year-old Anna Wilson, the Amazing Shake feels “overwhelming” at first, but learning how to have a conversation with someone “without becoming closed off or getting worried” makes her more comfortable in all kinds of situations. Maggie Zeysing, also 13, feels the same way. “It’s just been a big boost of confidence. I used to be kind of shy in my classes. I never really answered questions or spoke out, and now I just feel like I can do more since I’ve gone to this.”

During this time Dustin Howard is making intentional choices about the community leaders invited to judge Campbell Junior High’s final round of the Amazing Shake competition. He wants the leaders to see first-hand the positive impact on the students and to serve as judges of the “Gauntlet round.” Sixty of the 150 students in the program qualify for the Gauntlet, based on presentations about their service learning

projects. Going from station to station, in under a minute at each stop, local leaders such as Mayor Burtner, Superintendent Christy, Mike McCormick and Jen Algire judge their efforts. The top ten students deliver speeches to 4-H judges, and the five highest scorers move on to Ale-8-One for job interviews. The company selects the top three place winners.

Another ripple from this program: After Ale-8-One’s Marketing Coordinator DeAnne Elmore attends the Gauntlet round, the company contacts Campbell about having a few of its students develop social media posts for Main Street Winchester during the next school year. Elmore serves on Main Street Winchester’s board, which hopes 7th graders can create messages making downtown more attractive to their peers.

At this point, the Amazing Shake seems to be all students are talking about. Maggie, Anna, and other students in the program are promoting it with family, friends, and other teachers. Parents start to email Howard asking him when next year’s Gauntlet round will take place. Now, the whole staff at Campbell is paying greater attention to the program and its goals, and the support is there to expand the Amazing Shake to all 7th-grade classes for next year.

In February 2019, Campbell also invites district teachers and principals to a showcase highlighting the school’s vision of “producing a whole child education.” It’s an approach that seeks to ensure that each child is “healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.” It does this by pulling together the resources and knowledge of different community stakeholders.

Afterwards, Howard receives emails from several central office staff members and four Clark County school principals complimenting Campbell’s passionate approach. There is another showcase for the community, and Howard is planning an additional event for the junior high’s community partners in the fall. Along the way,

other schools in the Clark County district prepare showcases of their own, with guidance from Campbell. Middle school staffers from Frankfort also come to see what they’re doing.

For Howard, this is about establishing a different norm for how educators relate to the community.

The typical reaction to opening their school doors to the public is fear, he said. People are worried about judgment and “gotcha moments,” but by framing the events as a celebration of what’s happening with kids, his own staff is warming to the idea, and the idea is spreading beyond Campbell.

Student Voices Transforming Education

Rachel Belin, head of the Student Voice Team at the Prichard Committee in Lexington, began working with Dustin Howard during his first year at Campbell, in 2015, when The Greater Clark Foundation provides a \$10,000 What’s Your Ambition?! grant to pilot a student climate audit. It is a chance to bring an important goal to life: include students, especially those who are struggling, into the conversation about improving their schools.

Through the audit, Belin’s teenage team ask Campbell students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders to evaluate Campbell on topics like discipline, teacher respect for students, student support for one another, and the extent to which students feel valued and heard. One of the most striking findings is the discrepancy between how students and school staff find the climate. For example, two-thirds of students view bullying as the most pressing issue at the school. Not one teacher did.

Jen Algire calls the Campbell pilot program one of the foundation’s most successful investments. Based on the initial investment, Prichard continues to improve the student-led climate evaluation model and is actively spreading it to different parts of the state, hoping to make the approach a norm in Kentucky.

Students are now trained to lead the audit work in their own schools, thanks to their more turned-outward orientation. Belin reports, instead of swooping into other students schools to solve problems at the local level, “We are now tapping into the most local public knowledge and co-designing strategies with student stakeholders.” It’s a much more effective and sustainable model, she adds.

In the wake of tragic school shootings in Kentucky and across the nation, the Prichard Committee’s Student Voice Team holds a statewide teach-in and rally at the Capitol in Frankfort in 2018, attracting a wide audience. They draw on what they are learning from other students throughout the climate audits and talk about how critical a school’s emotional and social climate is to overall safety. The Op-Eds the Student Voice Team write make it into all of Kentucky’s major newspapers, and team members testify before Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’s Federal Safety Commission. A high school junior—a member of the Student Voice Team—joins the state legislature’s School Safety Working Group and “works to ensure that over the course of the eight-month listening tour students are well-represented as presenters before the committee,” according to Belin. The result is a crucial

amendment to Senate Bill 1, The School Safety and Resiliency Act, approved in the spring of 2019; it stipulates including students when writing required school safety plans.

The Turning Outward approach not only affects programs like the Student-Led School Climate Audit, it also leads the Prichard Committee to examine itself. In 2017, the organization finds itself focusing more on legislative leaders at the “grass tops” than on the communities and the public at the grassroots. Learning at the Lab affirms that community insights are just as valuable as expert knowledge—a key Harwood tenet—and is a wake-up call for the organization.

This prompts the Prichard team to revisit the very principles it was founded upon in 1983. The team reshapes its strategic plan, placing greater emphasis on a broader and deeper approach to interacting with Kentuckians going forward. This includes a group of grassroots champions it is recruiting around the state. The committees’ current strategic plan has benefited from richer and deeper citizen engagement. It states:

“The Prichard Committee works directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered in policy decisions related to excellence and equity in education.”

What emerges for the Student Voice Team’s parent organization is “a new approach to education policy conversations.” Belin explains: “The organization recognizes that what we do with students as primary stakeholders in our schools can move mountains in terms of education improvement.” Student voice takes its place among the voices of key adult stakeholders as central to their work.

Connecting school audits to the state’s discussion of safety is just one example of this new approach. In 2016, the Student Voice Team mobilizes students and a coalition of adults to testify against the state’s practice of diverting lottery money from needs-based scholarships to the general fund. Student stories make a powerful impact, leading the state legislature to earmark an additional \$14 million for college scholarships.

College affordability comes up again at a Budget Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education hearing. This time, instead of just highlighting different data, the students of the Prichard Committee Student Voice Team speak to their own and their peers’ challenges first-hand, including tales of food insecurity at Kentucky’s flagship university.

Another example: After hearing about some of the inequities students face in trying to further their education after high school, the Prichard Committee Student Voice Team spends a year talking to students from under-resourced communities throughout the state. The stories they gather lead to a new book — *Ready Or Not: Stories from Students Behind the Statistics*—in which students speak frankly about difficulties that few public policies acknowledge: focusing on school when they are helping to support their families back home or when they feel like a “traitor” to their culture because they left home.

“Since we published the book in October 2017, we have been presenting material from it to

students, educators, advocates and policymakers pretty much nonstop in Kentucky and across the country,” according to Belin. The significance of this student-driven approach is also recognized nationally when the Student Voice Team’s proposal to create a student-driven think tank to lift student voice around education equity issues is selected from 239 application submissions to receive a \$50,000 Innovation Award from Pathway 2 Tomorrow.

Rachel Belin and Dustin Howard are now talking about Prichard’s Student Voice Team returning to Campbell to try out the latest version of the climate audit. One big reason Belin says she wants to come back is the public innovator training in town. The seeds sown there have laid a foundation of support in the community that’s “unprecedented and invaluable.”



Photo © Michael Andrews

Reducing Worry, Anger and Fears

The urgent need for culture change in local schools is coming from other directions as well. In 2017, Kara Davies is working in special education at George Rogers Clark High School and looking for a way to make a greater impact in the lives of local students. She is witnessing daily the power struggles between teens, teachers, and administrators and is convinced that a mindfulness program can help “change the culture.”

Davies, who is also a mindfulness coach, approaches three friends and fellow mindfulness coaches with her idea. One of them is public innovator and yoga studio owner, Erin Smith. The four women set out to design a curriculum for all ages to pilot at the high school and elementary school levels. They take their proposal to The Greater Clark Foundation and receive a \$10,000 What’s Your Ambition?! grant.

The “Be Project” becomes a reality. “It’s just paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, without judgment.” Each one of the phrases is important, Davies says, and when applying them to an agitated student, can mean coaching kids to take deep breaths or do a body scan to recognize where the stress is knotting them up. “It’s about teaching them how to transition from a state of worry, anger, fear, whatever it is they’re feeling, into a state of calm so that we can then talk about whatever was going on.” Smith said the techniques work on both small “t” and big “T” traumas that so many Clark County students encounter every day—from having a toy snatched away to sexual abuse.

Around 100 teachers go through the first training, including a group of “model teachers” who serve as resources for others. Many teachers are discovering the practices are helping them with

classroom management and their students with emotional meltdowns.

“It’s about teaching them how to transition from a state of worry, anger, fear, whatever it is they’re feeling, into a state of calm so that we can then talk about whatever was going on”

Kara Davies conducts a survey of teachers three months after the program and learns more about the Be Project’s impact: 49 percent of those who respond report they find the program either “very” or “extremely” beneficial in their classrooms, while another 38% find the practice “somewhat beneficial.” By a wide margin, teachers report they want more instruction, and the program sparks an increase in their own personal mindfulness practice.

With these successes in mind, The Greater Clark Foundation awards the Be Project a second \$10,000 grant to spread the training district-wide. The Be Project gains substantial institutional support when the Clark County School Board takes notice and contributes an additional \$23,000. The team spreads the training to another seven schools. Almost one-third of the district’s 1,000 staff members are now trained in mindfulness instruction.

There are many inspiring stories of change since the project launch. One mother reported on Facebook her child with autism started doing “Elmo belly breathing” after getting upset. The

mood passes and is a startling improvement over the times these episodes have erupted in behaviors like scratching and hitting.

Davies sees similar turnarounds at the Clark County Preschool, where she becomes the principal. One elementary school teacher sends the Be Project team frequent thank-you notes, she says, because the program “has completely changed her life. She was having massive panic attacks, really struggling to find joy in her job. She’s a great teacher, but it’s a stressful job. And not only is she using mindfulness in her classroom, but she’s now adopted it as a personal practice.”

Erin Smith hears reports from her daughter about how teachers at Campbell Junior High are using their training. “One of the things we were encouraging them to do is regularly ask your class, ‘Hey, what’s up with you guys? What’s on your heart right now? Two or three of her teachers do this.” Asking these simple questions leads to discussions about many of the critical issues reported in *Waving the Community’s Flag*, such as race relations and drugs. “Students want to engage with these big questions,” Smith says. “When that happens, they feel heard,” addressing one of their complaints about school. It also gives them the tools they need for emotional regulation, preparing them to be “decent human beings as adults.”

Students at the high school form a mindfulness club, helping many of them cope when one of their fellow students is jailed for involvement in a tragic drug-related shooting that kills two teenage girls. Leeds Theatre, holding a rehearsal of the play *The Lion King Jr.* that night, goes on lockdown as the crime and police chase unfolds around them. The next day, shaken by what happened and concerned about the impact on her young cast, Tracey Miller invites Kara Davies and a colleague to teach mindfulness techniques to help her young actors cope. After the show opens, older cast members lead the performers through these exercises before each performance.

The mindfulness program ripples spread even more when Patricia Stewart-Hopkins joins the team. She is a regional director for Mountain Comprehensive Care, a non-profit mental health agency supporting students in Clark County. Stewart-Hopkins sees this as “an opportunity for us to learn and grow and create that shared language to use with the students and one another.” She becomes part of the initial pilot project at the high school. From there, Stewart-Hopkins said, “I went on to write a grant to support an adolescent and child therapeutic rehabilitative program that included more mindfulness training by some of the same teachers that were part of the first grant that [Kara Davies] wrote.” When the proposal goes to The Greater Clark Foundation, it re-invests in the idea, viewing Stewart-Hopkins as an up-and-coming leader. Mountain Comprehensive Care develops a trauma-informed mindfulness curriculum that is attracting attention. Another clinic adopts the approach, too, and Stewart-Hopkins shared the program and it is now in the Fayette County school district as well.

Other Kentucky school districts are reaching out to the Be Project program, and the team is presenting their work and results at conferences in the state.

Other Kentucky school districts are reaching out to the Be Project program, and the team is presenting their work and results at conferences in the state. Because their practices are being shared, Jen Algire at The Greater Clark Foundation expects the two groups’ mindfulness curricula to expand across Kentucky, just as the Prichard Committee’s Student Voice work is rippling out.

A New Path to Tackle Drug Addiction

The group of Lab attendees with the toughest time getting started is the Substance Abuse Team. A few of their members drop out after the Lab due to a variety of personal and professional reasons. Remaining are two extremely motivated individuals, Jennifer Gulley from the Clark County Health Department and Roy Hudson, a retired manufacturing plant supervisor.

Gulley is involved with the department's needle exchange program as well as the Clark County Agency for Substance Abuse Policy (ASAP). She initially joins the team, in part, to get word out about current efforts to curb the opioid epidemic. Hudson sees too many family members and friends succumbing to addiction. This issue is a heavy lift for just two people, and their work eventually stalls.

In response, Linda Barrett urges Terry Davidson, Executive Director of the Clark County Homeless Coalition, to meet with Gulley and Hudson. Davidson is a fellow public innovator, but had not been active since an unsuccessful attempt to organize a low-income housing team. The three of them click and Gulley, Davidson and Hudson make a bold choice: revive the Substance Abuse Team by hosting a Community Conversation with substance abusers in recovery. They pull it together within just a few weeks. What they hear is startling; it changes everything for them.

The Community Conversation participants want a community free of drugs. "It was actually pretty much the very first words out of their mouth," Gulley recalls. "When we asked them the question, 'What kind of community do you want?' their responses were resounding, 'I want a drug-free community!' That was profound to me."

The team's nine-page summary of the four Community Conversations they eventually hold, entitled, "In Their Own Words," includes this aspirational statement:

People want a safe, drug-free community where there is understanding and support for those in addiction and recovery without judgment and stigma. People want hope for a better future.

The report contains heartbreaking comments about why participants start their drug use, what keeps them from achieving recovery, and what actions in the community can make a difference. Here are some comments from different conversation participants:

"My mental illness was not addressed when I was young, and that is what led to me using drugs. I wonder what my life would look like today if my mental illness had been identified early?"

"My husband had oral surgery last week. He was given a prescription for a whole bottle of Lortab to get filled before the surgery so he would have it. I asked the dentist why she was giving that many, and she said it was just as cheap to get the whole bottle."

"EMS doesn't want to respond to overdoses."

"I am here. Resources are there!"

"Help kids feel like they don't need drugs."

"Don't talk to me about God early in recovery. Take religion out of it."

"Show us some support. We need options to move forward in recovery."

The Community Conversations put a fine point on residents asking for help to navigate the complicated system of treatment and recovery programs and the judgmental treatment they often experience. The "judgments" come from a host of people and places, including officials, their churches, and the public at large. The stigma reinforces drug use, they say. During the hospital's Community Conversations, Candice Tackett heard similar comments from patients about being judged by doctors and nurses when they come in for addiction-related emergencies and treatment.

One day, when talking about their progress and what they are learning, Barrett, Gulley, and Davidson start discussing the group's name, making them the third team to examine the connection between their sense of purpose and what they call themselves. "Substance Abuse" simply doesn't capture the change they and everyone else want to see in Clark County. The three look for a phrase and logo people can put on posters, stickers, and even window decals indicating genuine public support for drug users during a crisis or when looking for a job. The idea that sticks is 180°: Turning Clark Around.

Meanwhile, the team also spends time weighing how best to release their Community Conversations summary. They discuss possible strategies with various community leaders, and try to enlist local groups as "champions" for the report—but to no avail. The tension is the result of some of the material being sensitive—critical of the courts, jail,

and other public institutions that make decisions about people with addictions and their families.

Notwithstanding their worry about potential backlash, the team feels duty-bound to be faithful stewards of what they are learning from the community. Terry Davidson is convinced of the benefits of bringing this community knowledge to light. "That report to me, while very damning and breathtaking in some places, is very hopeful. There are so many potential solutions in there. So many things that every single person in our community can do to make a difference. There's not one person in this community that can't make a difference."

Gathering insights from people in recovery with the 180° Team makes a deep impression on Davidson, making her feel like she has become a better listener and more passionate about helping those with addictions. "The impact of the stigma on the psyche of addicts—honestly, it didn't occur to me." She's making substance abuse more of the focus at her crisis shelter and is even talking up recovery with people who aren't homeless, something she has not done before.

As for Gulley, "I was already passionate about it, because I have a personal family connection to the issue. But to connect with Terry, her work and her passion, it's creating synergy. The 180° report we've been able to produce, it wouldn't have been possible without Terry and me coming together."

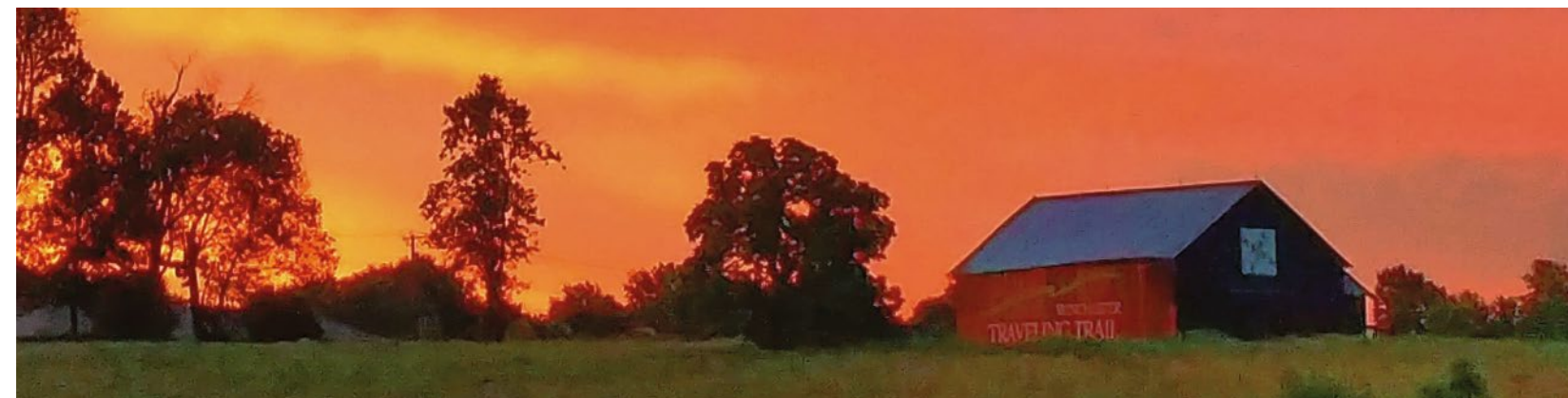


Photo © Michael Andrews

Gulley says the links to other groups and the community knowledge they gathered are helping her department with future county health assessments. She's also acting differently on the job, doing more "motivational interviewing" of people when they come to the needle exchange program. "Meaning, finding out what people's goals are. What do they want for their life? Then using that to link them to resources and to develop trust."

Davidson and Gulley are also working on grants together for onsite peer support, made possible only because of the innovator's network. The Health Department will be involved in a \$177,000 grant the Homeless Coalition is receiving from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in order to double the

number of people the Homeless Coalition helps with housing.

The 180° Team is moving forward on sharing what they learned from their Community Conversations. Jennifer Gulley presented the report to the Northeast Area Education Health Center (NE-AHEC), which was looking for public insights to inform their work on the opioid crisis. The director of NE-AHEC, who also serves as chair for the Northeast Kentucky Opioid Crisis Consortium, immediately understands the power of the findings and now wants to extend the Community Conversations across seven counties in NE-AHEC's region. At the writing of this report, Davidson said, the 180° Team plans to release "In Their Own Words" to local physical and mental health providers, local judges, and then to other groups.

Achieving Recovery Together

Juanita Everman and Amber Fields-Hull are also well acquainted with drug and alcohol addiction. They're both in recovery themselves. They connect at Celebrate Recovery, a program at Mike McCormick's Calvary Christian Church where they both serve as lay leaders, along with Everman's husband and Lab attendee, Dickie Everman.

The two women attend one Celebrate Recovery event together, which leads them to participate in a statewide leadership academy on recovery led by People Advocating Recovery. Their involvement produces a new pilot project idea they bring back to Clark Regional Medical Center in late 2017. "We approached the hospital about coming in with peer support specialists when there is an overdose," Everman says. "It was a passion. It was something we felt like we needed to do, and wanted to do, because we both have

suffered loss to overdoses. We just didn't want to lose one more, whether it was our family or whoever."

They start an organization called Achieving Recovery Together, or ART. The basis of the program is that people struggling with addiction are more likely to enter treatment programs if they can quickly connect with a sympathetic person who experienced substance abuse themselves. They received a What's Your Ambition?! grant to help with the organization's start-up expenses.

Everman and Fields-Hull use the grant to purchase equipment to get open. They are just getting set up when the 180° Team is launching its Community Conversations. Fields-Hull and Everman are not part of the original Lab network but learn of 180° via word of mouth. Everman joins the 180° Team, Fields-Hull quickly follows and both

assist with the Community Conversation and with the meetings on what to do about releasing the summary report.

Meanwhile, ART raises money to recruit and train sixteen peer counselors, including two coaches specializing in long-term recovery. The group starts reaching out to people with addictions on Fridays during the Health Department needle exchange program. The hospital eventually gives ART the go-ahead to connect with its patients, too. Now, Candice Tackett says, "An ART volunteer is called whenever a person with a suspected drug or alcohol abuse problem enters the facility."

The organization enjoys a 52% percent success rate of getting people into a treatment program. "That's not including the support groups," Fields-Hull reports. "That's an actual intensive outpatient, long-term facility, or Medicaid-assisted treatment facility, but we just make a point to [support] whatever that person wants." The hospital provided only some assistance to patients with addictions before ART was on the scene. Staff would treat an individual's acute conditions, only to discharge them.

Witnessing ART in action is helping doctors and nurses deal with substance abusers more compassionately, Tackett said. Now, Fields-Hull attends some of their internal staff meetings. In addition, she goes with Tackett outside of clinics and to nearby counties expressing interest in their peer-counseling approach. Tackett, Gulley, and the ART team also serve on a regional community health-assessment committee that is searching for solutions to the opioid crisis.

In April 2019, Everman and Fields-Hull take another positive step. This time opening a storefront downtown, where their peer-counseling services are both more visible and accessible to the community. ART also offers life-skill classes to help people stay sober. "We've developed a two-year plan to help them maintain long-term recovery with budgeting, grocery shopping...

employment assistance, and housing assistance," Everman says. Volunteers donate their time to make the new office possible—all individuals in recovery themselves.

The organization is now partnering, not only with the hospital and the Clark County Health Department, but also with the local Agency for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP), the Department of Community Based Services, the drug and mental health courts, OBGYNs in town, and the school district, where they do drug and alcohol awareness programs.

Fields-Hull laments the stigma is still there for people with addictions, but things are getting better. "We've definitely seen a shift within our community," she says. "A couple of years ago, a lot of community members just kind of wanted to shove the challenge under a rug and act like it didn't exist." She thinks Clark County is unusual in having a number of "great organizations" that are working together to stem the opioid epidemic. Although, she wishes churches would step up and do more, calling them the biggest "untapped resource" in the community.

The Kentucky Public Health Association named ART the Outstanding Group of the Year for 2018, citing their contributions to public health:

“The opioid crisis has impacted all of us. As public health leaders, we spend much of our time educating our communities on the public-health impacts of this epidemic. Many times, we hear, ‘they choose to do drugs,’ or ‘they are going to die anyway.’ ART proves it is possible to do work daily with the hope of helping people recover.”

The Progress Continues

During the writing of this progress report, efforts in Winchester and Clark County keep progressing and evolving. Here are just a handful of examples:

- Main Street Winchester is continuing to design and implement innovative ways to engage local residents in decisions on downtown development.
- Clark Regional Medical Center and the school district are forging new ways for physicians to support local students.
- Upward Sports is becoming its own nonprofit and is embedding the Turn Outward practice into the “memorandum of understanding” between the participating churches, executive director’s job description, and hiring questions for staff.
- WIN is seeing a new convening role for itself by bringing together a group of ten environmental educators identified in recent research, marking another step in the group’s evolution.
- The Youth Advisory Board at Leeds is listening to the community for its art installation called “Find Your Spark,” which involves canvassing the community to discover four words that convey what people want for Winchester and Clark County: spark, opportunity, individuality, and acceptance.

And so it goes. Winchester and Clark County are seizing the moment to wave the community flag. New actions continue to emerge. New relationships and connections and momentum are forged.

The progress is promising and it’s happening—one step at a time.



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GROWING PROGRESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

In just three short years, Winchester and Clark County have made enormous progress. As noted in the Introduction, the community has moved from The Waiting Place to the early Catalytic stage in The Harwood Institute's Five Stages of Community Life.

In the early Catalytic stage, there are growing numbers of pockets of change emerging, and the number of people and organizations stepping forward increases. This is often the most exciting stage for a community, where new ideas, new efforts, and new hope take root, grow and spread. Think of it as the "innovation stage."

There are key steps a community can take to accelerate and deepen its movement firmly into the Catalytic stage and grow and sustain its future. This is the task of Winchester and Clark County now. Here are five key actions:

1 Grow pockets of change.

The community has successfully grown a whole collection of new pockets of change over the last three years, adding to those that already existed. To move forward, the community should:

- Continue to focus on the core issues and concerns raised in *Waving the Community's Flag*, such as downtown; various community divides such as race and culture, where people live, and faith denominations, among others; drug addiction; family breakdown; and ensuring the right supports for kids. The good news is that the community is now taking actions on these issues—the focus must continue. The community must build on its good start.

Nine Big Missteps In the Catalytic Stage

As you think about steps Winchester and Clark County can take to grow its progress and sustainability, here are nine missteps The Harwood Institute has identified that communities often make in the Catalytic stage and should seek to avoid.

- 1 Overpromise and under-deliver, and thus deepen people's sense of frustration, even cynicism, and lead to more lost hope.
- 2 Comprehensive plans get designed that are too big for a community to take on and fail to realistically determine the capacities and needs of a community.
- 3 Spend time and resources trying to get everyone on board and around the table.
- 4 Fail to make room for big and small efforts and miss potential allies.
- 5 Coordinate all the activities and players in a community to get everyone moving in unison, which stifles innovation and creativity.
- 6 Expend large sums of money long before anyone has a clear-eyed view of where investments are most needed, and what it takes for those investments to actually succeed.
- 7 Invest in organizations that only produce measurable results, when what's critical is to spark forward movement and build the capacities and sense of possibility in the community.
- 8 Support communication plans that hype success and impact.
- 9 Move on to the next new thing while leaving behind emerging pockets of change.

- The community must continue to support and invest in these pockets of change. It is easy to move on to the next new initiative or program, which may leave behind good efforts that require continued nurturing, support and attention.
- Know that some pockets will linger, even fold over time; their main purpose may have been to help get Winchester and Clark County on a better trajectory. In this stage of community life, it is essential to leave room for trial and error. Other new pockets will emerge, helping to fuel the next round of progress. This is all part of the “innovation” the community will experience while in the Catalytic stage.

2 Develop the cadre of leaders.

A growing number of public innovators and other local change-agents have emerged over the last three years. Such individuals are essential to the continued progress of Winchester and Clark County. To move forward, the community should:

- Bring the emerging cadre of leaders together so they can create allies and a support network. No leader can go it alone, especially in this stage of community life, where creating change is hard, tiring and trying. These leaders need personal and emotional support. They need to know others are standing next to them.



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- Make sure to invest in the continued development of these leaders. They will face new challenges, be required to navigate new waters, and need to find new ways to collaborate with others. Developing the capabilities of these leaders is essential.
- Grow this cadre of leaders. Some existing leaders will burn out, move to new communities, change jobs, encounter life issues, among other changes and challenges. Moreover, new opportunities to take action will emerge, requiring more leaders. In all, it is critical to continue to strengthen and expand the base of leaders in the community.

3 Invest in key organizations and groups.

A whole host of existing and new organizations and groups are fueling Winchester and Clark County’s progress now—including Leeds Theatre, Main Street Winchester, Better Together Winchester, Upward Sports, and many others. To move forward, the community should:

- Invest in these and other organizations and groups that can continue to fuel progress. Remember, many of these organizations and groups are still at early developmental stages, and without the proper support they can and will fail.
- Not all organizations and groups are meant to last over time. The role of some has been to help spark positive movement in the community; then they will sunset. This is critical to keep in mind.
- Some groups will continue to evolve their mission and purpose. There are examples of this throughout this progress report. Recalibrating can be a good thing for organizations and groups; it must be distinguished from an organization or group simply seeking to stay afloat when its purpose has come to a close.

4 Create informal networks for innovation and learning.

An informal network of leaders and organizations is already growing in Winchester and Clark County. That is evidenced in part by the numerous examples of overlap between and among public innovators and other local leaders who are teaming up to work together in different combinations, on different issues, and in different ways. More is to be done now. To move forward, the community should:

- Create spaces for leaders and organizations to come together to talk about their efforts, and how they can support one another.
- Place a special emphasis in these spaces on learning and innovation: focus on what people are learning from their individual efforts, how that relates to what others are learning, and what are the insights, lessons, and implications for making more progress.
- Help people and groups see possibilities for breaking down silos and fragmentation, but do not force collaboration or coordination. This can stymie innovation and learning, particularly in the early Catalytic stage. Only when people and groups are ready and willing should they collaborate.

5 Create a can-do story.

Nascent stories of change in Winchester and Clark County are just starting to emerge, but many are just beginning. They exist in isolation from one another and most people in the community have not heard of them or been touched by them. Many public innovators and change-agents may not even be aware of the change they are helping to create daily. To move forward, the community should:

- Make visible invisible stories of change by helping public innovators and other change-agents identify, describe and uplift the change they are creating. This process needs to be ongoing, as the change is always unfolding.
- Shine a light on positive stories of change so more people throughout the community can see and hear them. Do not assume “people know” about these stories—they likely do not. The fact is, most people will not know until they are told about these success stories.
- Knit together individual stories of change into a larger narrative that enables people to see that a more promising trajectory is taking shape with growing momentum. Avoid over-selling the impact and success of these stories.



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