

2010: A Snapshot of Our Progress



April 2010 - Unite Escambia is bringing businesses, organizations, and volunteers together around a shared community agenda that addresses Education, Environment, Health, Housing and Poverty. Five Solutions Teams are aggressively setting goals, advocating for change, and implementing action plans utilizing hundreds of partners.

A great deal of community progress has already been documented:

EDUCATION SOLUTIONS TEAM

CHAIR: Ted Kirchharr, Landrum Companies

Team Mission: To promote quality educational opportunities and life-long learning.

Team Goals:

1. Create and support an effective data system to transfer data collected by the voluntary pre-kindergarten programs to the School District of Escambia County.
2. Assist in moving Escambia County from the 50th percentile to the 75th percentile of the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screening (FLKRS) by 2020.
3. Assist in moving Escambia County to the 75th percentile of the State District Composite Score by 2020.

Community Accomplishments within the Education Priority:

- We became the first county in Florida to create a web-based database to collect the health and developmental data gathered by voluntary pre-kindergarten programs. Access to the database was granted to the School District of Escambia County. The program is being reviewed for effectiveness and will be continued in 2010.
- The Education Solutions Team conducted workshops with the staff of Warrington Middle School to establish a new vision and direction for the school.

ENVIRONMENT SOLUTIONS TEAM

CHAIR: Dr. Enid Sisskin, University of West Florida

Team Mission: To improve the health of the environment and the public.

Team Goals:

1. Reduce trash collected at festivals by 30% by separating out recyclables by December, 2008.
2. Start a reasonable curbside recycling program by December, 2009.
3. Reduce the number of cars on the road and miles driven, to be checked every six months beginning Jan. 2010.
4. Develop a comprehensive environmental education program, beginning December 2008.

Community Accomplishments within the Environment Priority:

- Escambia County is now collecting recycling at festivals and there is now curbside recycling available throughout the City and County.
- As of January 2009, the EcoMinute, an environmental education program airs daily at 5 p.m. on WUWF public radio and is available 24/7 online at WUWF.org
- There is discussion about new permanent funding sources for the bus system.

POVERTY SOLUTIONS TEAM

CHAIR: Janice Thomas, Florida Department of Children and Families

Team Mission: To make Escambia County a community without poverty.

Team Goals:

1. Increase to 200 the number of partners working to reduce poverty by June 30, 2010.
2. Reduce the number of people living below the federal poverty level in Escambia County by 50%, from 42,935 in 2006 (15.8%), including 16,918 children, to 21,467 in 2020 (7.9%), including 8,459 children.

Community Accomplishments within the Poverty Priority:

- 132 graduates of the "Gettin' Ahead" workshops; 29 are now Circles Leaders with 36 community allies (volunteers) confirmed.
- Through the Financial Stability Coalition, 1,200 tax returns for low-income residents resulting in \$1.4 million economic impact.
- Twelve 30-minute programs on WUWF-TV; monthly ENewsletter; presentations and trainings attended by 1,350 people.
- \$60,000 grant to establish Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

HEALTH SOLUTIONS TEAM

CHAIR: Robin Herr, retired President/CEO, Health First Network;

CO-CHAIR: Dr. Susan Turner, Escambia County Health Dept.

Team Mission: To educate and motivate children and families to practice healthy lifestyles including physical activity and healthy nutrition thereby reducing childhood obesity and its effect on future generations.

Team Goals:

1. Reduce rates of children who are overweight or obese in Escambia County from 30% to 20% by 2020.
2. Increase by 14% the number of adults and children who are physically active and eat nutritious food by 2010.

Community Accomplishments within the Health Priority:

- **We Can!** (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition) is a fun, interactive and nationally-successful program adopted by the Health Solutions Team in June, 2008, and taught to 85 local youth.
- The School/Community Garden Action Team is coordinating efforts to plant and maintain community fruit and vegetable gardens.
- Due to the attention brought to the hazardous pedestrian conditions facing Spencer Bibbs Elementary students, a four-way-stop is being put in at the intersection of Avery Street and Sixth Avenue.

HOUSING SOLUTIONS TEAM

CHAIR: Susan Senkarik, United Way of Escambia County

Team Mission: To ensure that everyone in Escambia County has the tools necessary to obtain/maintain affordable housing.

Team Goals:

1. Increase by 100 every quarter the number of individuals who have the tools necessary to obtain/maintain affordable housing.
2. Conduct at least 10 housing workshops yearly with emphasis on basic money management, credit and credit repair, and basic home maintenance.
3. Decrease substandard housing by half (from 5% to 2.5%) by 2020.
4. Increase homeownership by 10% by 2020.

Community Accomplishments within the Housing Priority:

- Two large scale, open to the public Housing oriented workshops: 190+ in attendance
- Four partner organizations held 75 housing/ basic money management workshops reaching 487 households
- At least 4 home purchases recorded and more than 100 participants have avoided eviction or home foreclosure

Learn more at www.UniteEscambia.com



Unite Escambia is a community-wide movement in pursuit of a shared Community Vision: *“A healthy community where all have the inspiration and opportunity to succeed.”*

We are aiming for BROAD-BASED community participation - for each resident to do his or her part to move the needle forward in the areas of education, environment, health, housing, and poverty. We believe that everyday actions can improve conditions for ALL.

Action Items you, your business/organization, or your family can take NOW:

EDUCATION

ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILDREN

- Join the Parent Teacher Association
- Attend a School Board Meeting
- Meet your children's teachers

CELEBRATE LEARNING

- Congratulate children for academic achievement

SHARE THE GIFT OF EDUCATION

- Donate school supplies and books
- Start a children's book swap group
- Assist children with homework and school projects
- Help children learn a new word each day
- Start a neighborhood reading group

VOLUNTEER

- Become a classroom volunteer or after-school tutor
- Become a mentor
- Become a tutor in an adult literacy program
- Provide job shadowing and/or internship opportunities

ENVIRONMENT

ADVOCATE FOR THE EARTH

- Ask stores to make reusable shopping bags available
- Encourage recycling programs
- Encourage employers to offer telecommuting/flex work schedules
- Encourage businesses to buy hybrid fleet vehicles
- Ask for traffic light synchronization
- Encourage adoption/enforcement of green ordinances
- Identify more places to dispose of hazardous materials

DO-IT-YOURSELF

- Plant native trees around your home
- Install programmable thermostats, ceiling fans, energy efficient light bulbs and appliances
- Reset your thermostat – higher in summer and lower in winter
- Car pool with neighbors and co-workers
- Recycle
- Use and reuse cloth shopping bags
- Take hazardous materials to the community recycling round up

- Participate in community beach and park clean-up days
- Organize a neighborhood clean-up day

HEALTH

ADVOCATE

- Ask for healthy food choices in schools and restaurants
- Ask for safe routes to schools and multi-purpose pathways to bike, roller-blade, and walk with your children outdoors
- Attend a Health Solution Team meeting to learn more of the many opportunities to participate!

DO-IT-YOURSELF

- Be physically active 150 minutes per week, about 30 minutes per day. Try brisk walking, biking, dancing, swimming, gardening or other activities you enjoy
- Children and adolescents need more activity, about 60 minutes per day.
- Limit screen time - your family will see fewer unhealthy foods ads and less violence. Use the time to be physically active
- Eat more fruits and vegetables - at least 2 1/2 cups daily for most adolescents and adults. Choose different colors to get the best health benefits. Go to www.mypyramid.gov for more information and recommended servings for children.
- Make 1/2 of your grains whole including whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, rice and crackers
- Eat less fried and other high fat foods. Choose healthy fats such as olive oil and avocado. Learn more about healthy fats at www.mypyramid.gov

HOUSING

DO-IT-YOURSELF

- Find out if your credit score is causing you to pay higher rent or insurance rates; if so, seek out and attend a Money Smart workshop
- When you get your income tax refund use part of it to pre-pay rent, house payments or insurance - you may get a discount especially on your insurance
- Start a neighborhood skill swap; neighbors helping each other with basic home maintenance

- Fix the leaking faucet, install weather stripping around windows and doors, replace the refrigerator, install ceiling fans - your home will be more affordable by saving money on utility bills. Even if you rent, work with your landlord for repair and upgrades
- If your children all have homes of their own consider renting a room to someone getting back on their feet - background and references required of course but it will help you with your housing expenses and them with theirs

VOLUNTEER

- Volunteer to become an FDIC-certified Money Smart trainer
- Volunteer and be trained with county code enforcement to do housing assessments identifying area sub-standard homes

POVERTY

DO-IT-YOURSELF

- Grow your own vegetables

LEARN TO EARN

- Attend free or low-cost workshops to enhance skills
- Encourage school attendance and success
- Attend job fairs

VOLUNTEER

- Participate as an adult literacy tutor
- Provide pro-bono health/legal/tax services
- Provide free workshops on topics in which you are an expert
- Donate food to local food pantries
- Provide transportation for elderly neighbors
- Work on Habitat home construction

AS A BUSINESS, TAKE ACTION

- Train all employees in *Bridges Out of Poverty* concepts
- Form *Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin'-By World* groups and provide free income tax preparation and FDIC Money Smart workshops for employees who earn low wages

Unite Escambia Community Champion: Buzz Ritchie, President/CEO of Gulf Coast Community Bank

Learn more at www.UniteEscambia.com

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