

2010 C★L
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2010 C★L
staff

Rod Lane
United Way of Central Illinois
Allan Woodson, *The Greater Springfield
Chamber of Commerce*
Stacy Reed
Sangamon County Community Foundation



year★BOOK
2010

The Continuum of Learning community initiative was launched in 2008 to ensure that all in Sangamon County are **READY TO:**

★ **Learn** ★ **work** ★ **succeed**

★ **founding partners**

Sangamon County Community Foundation
United Way of Central Illinois
The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

★ **for more information**

visit www.continuumoflearning.com

call (217) 789-4431 or...





from the *chairman*

★ *april 2011*

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Steering Committee of the Continuum of Learning (CoL), I am excited to share with you the CoL's first "Annual Yearbook"!

Just as the name implies, this "yearbook" is a look back at some of the CoL's accomplishments in 2010. You'll see snapshots on several exciting programs, including a pilot project that is helping to prepare children throughout Sangamon County for kindergarten and a project that aims to rapidly increase the number of nurses in our community.

I hope this yearbook piques your interest in the CoL and prompts you to learn more. It has been my privilege to serve as the CoL's Steering Committee chair since its inception in 2008 when it was formed as a joint venture by The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, United Way of Central Illinois and Sangamon County Community Foundation.

Since then, hundreds of community citizens have volunteered their time and expertise to participate on Action Teams that address five goals:

1. To have every child in Sangamon County ready for kindergarten.
2. To have every student from kindergarten through fifth grade performing academically at or above grade level.
3. To have every student graduate with a plan for his/her future.
4. To raise post-secondary educational attainment and to prepare students for occupations critical to Sangamon County's economic growth.
5. To have Sangamon County residents achieve their highest employment potential through continuing education and career development.

The schools cannot achieve these aspirations alone. A great deal happens outside of the traditional classroom that affects students' ability to succeed. That's where we come in – working in partnership with the schools and our community to ensure that our citizens are "Ready to Learn, Ready to Work and Ready to Succeed."

harry BERMAN
steering committee chair



action TEAM 1

KINDERGARTEN READINESS ★ pilot project launched

In April 2010 a dozen programs serving more than 900 preschool children in Sangamon County began using the same tool – the Brigance Early Childhood Assessment Kit for ages 3-5 years – when screening children who were slated to enter kindergarten in the fall. Results from the screenings were shared with school districts and used to help connect children to appropriate interventions.

The launch of this initiative was years in the making, after much discussion and debate among early childhood centers as to which tool to use and how to implement the program.

“It’s thrilling to think of how this project is impacting the education of our children,” said Brenda Lothman, director of Building Blocks Preschool West. “It’s creating a continuity that I have not seen before in our community. By using a common screening tool and sharing the results with the school districts, kindergarten teachers will be able to know more about the needs of their incoming students.”

The programs that participated in this first phase of the pilot project were:

- Beginning Steps Child Development Center
- Building Blocks Preschool South
- Building Blocks Preschool West
- Little Flower
- Lincoln Land Community College Child Development Center
- My Friends Discovery Center
- Springfield Ball Charter
- Springfield Public School District #186 Early Start Pre-K Program
- Springfield Urban League Head Start
- Springfield YMCA Discovery Preschool
- St. Aloysius
- St. John’s Lutheran Preschool



The pilot project was made possible through a \$10,000 grant by the Sangamon County Community Foundation to the Sangamon County Regional Office of Education to develop a database that identifies pre-kindergarten children living in Sangamon County and other critical information needed to connect children with appropriate interventions. In addition, Community Child Care Connection, Inc., an organization funded in part by the Illinois Department of Human Services, contributed funding, training and database development in an effort to support the distribution and implementation of a common screening tool.



action TEAM 2

MENTORING PROGRAM

★ *connecting healthcare professionals and students*

A new program – “Healthcare Professionals in the Classroom” launched in November 2010 thanks to a broad network of community partners including the CoL, Springfield Public Schools, The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Lincoln Land Community College, The Capital Area Career Center, Memorial Medical Center, St. John’s Hospital, Benedictine University at Springfield and University of Illinois Springfield.

Healthcare professionals from various fields spent a day hosting small group presentations and discussions with Franklin Middle School seventh graders. The goals of the program were to engage children at an early age to consider career paths that might interest them and to explore some of Sangamon County’s most robust career fields. Eventually, CoL leaders hope to expand the program to include more professions and track students who self-identify as being interested in particular fields so they can maintain long-term connections with local mentors.



action TEAM 3

★ PARTNERS INVESTING IN NURSING’S FUTURE

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Partners Investing in Nursing’s Future grant was awarded to the Central Illinois Nursing Initiative (CINI) in 2009, with the mission of rapidly increasing the nursing workforce in Sangamon County.

The program quickly accomplished goals in a variety of areas. More than 40 nursing students who had been previously wait-listed or could not attend regular weekly classes are now enrolled in a new weekend Associate Degree in Nursing program at Lincoln Land Community College – a curriculum created thanks to funding and strategic planning received through CINI.

The program also looks at increasing diversity within the field of nursing, and at raising the number of Master’s-prepared nurses within Springfield and Sangamon County who could then go on to become faculty members and educate new generations in the field of nursing.

The CINI Partners include: Sangamon County Community Foundation; The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; Lincoln Land Community College; St. John’s College; Benedictine University at Springfield; St. John’s Hospital; Memorial Medical Center; Kindred Healthcare; Springfield Urban League; Primed for Life; and Springfield Black Chamber of Commerce.



central illinois
NURSING
initiative

action TEAMS 1★2★3

★ PLANNING FOR A PROMISE

For several years, leaders within the CoL have been following the work of the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ) and its multi-faceted approach to breaking the cycle of poverty and increasing educational attainment for at-risk children. In the fall of 2009, the CoL recruited a group of ten community representatives to attend HCZ's first-ever national conference to learn more about the project as well as plans for the soon-to-be announced Promise Neighborhood federal grant program.

Soon after returning from the HCZ conference, the CoL action teams met to discuss how Springfield might adopt its own version of a Promise Neighborhood. During this time, leaders from the Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois (MHCCI) were attending the CoL action team meetings and pursuing a grant opportunity through the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation to improve children's mental health services in Springfield. They realized that a neighborhood-based approach, similar to a Promise Neighborhood model, could really set their proposal apart from the others, and they approached the CoL about serving as a lead partner in the application.

Ultimately, by "plugging in" to the CoL and demonstrating the collaborative effort already under way, MHCCI was one of five communities in Illinois to receive a one-year, \$300,000 planning grant in 2010 with the possibility of an additional three years of funding for implementation. The CoL was contracted to serve as the Community Convener to lead discussions and strategic efforts in bringing a Promise Neighborhood and comprehensive system of care to life in East Springfield.



special events

Since it was formed in 2008, the CoL has hosted Spring and Fall "Community Roundtable" public events, where Action Teams provide updates and engage in dialogue with community members.



spring 2010 community roundtable

The CoL partnered with Advance Illinois to host more than 60 leaders from education; business; government; and private sectors, to discuss bottom-up reform addressing the needs and concerns of Sangamon County citizens.

"The CoL is a great way to reinforce that education begins at birth and continues into adulthood. Our goal is to work with community leaders to build on this momentum," said Advance Illinois Executive Director Robin Steans.



fall 2010 community roundtable

Organizations from across Sangamon County provided displays highlighting their programs speaking directly to the aspirations laid out by the community through the CoL. Participants included Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Illinois; Business Education Partnership; Computer Banc; Faith Coalition for the Common Good; Family Service Center of Sangamon County; Gen H Coalition; Girl Scouts of Central Illinois; Illinois College Advising Corps; Lincoln Land Community College; Lincoln Library - College Assistance Program; Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois; One Hope United; Prairie Center Against Sexual Assault; Sangamon County Regional Office of Education; Sparc; Springfield Urban League; and Springfield YMCA.

In addition, the CoL was tapped by leading statewide organizations such as Voices for Illinois Children and Advance Illinois, to co-host multiple symposiums about education throughout the year.



communityworks endowment

The Communityworks Endowment held at the Sangamon County Community Foundation is a grant making fund to support issues of childcare, education, workforce development and land use & protection – all vital issues to address. In 2010 multiple grants were made from the endowment that aligned with the aspirations set forth by the community through the Col:

- \$10,000 to the Sangamon County Regional Office of Education to develop a database that identifies pre-kindergarten children and critical information needed to connect those children with appropriate interventions.
- \$25,000 to the Partners Investing in Nursing's Future program to increase the number of nurses in our community.
- \$10,000 to Illinois College Advising Corps to retain two advisors in Springfield high schools to provide college guidance to students during the 2010-11 school year.
- \$2,500 to Springfield Public Schools as a College Access Network matching gift for the Illinois Student Assistance Program grant.

**A special note – Right now, our community has a special opportunity to rapidly grow the size of the Communityworks Endowment through a match opportunity by the Grand Victoria Foundation of Chicago. For every dollar raised locally, they will match it up to \$2 million. Time is of the essence, however. Grand Victoria has set a deadline of September 30, 2011 to complete this match. If you are interested in contributing or learning more, contact John Stremsterfer at (217) 789-4431 or stremsterfer@sccf.us.*



united way 2010 allocations

United Way supports individuals and families by employing a dual strategy focused on their short and long term needs. It has a longstanding commitment to programs that meet the basic needs of food, shelter, healthcare, and victim services.

United Way's second focus is funding programs aligned with the community's educational initiative, the Continuum of Learning. In 2010 43% of its funding – which equates to \$730,469 – went to these programs. United Way understands and supports the vital role that social service programs can play in providing education beyond the classroom for children and adults. Of the 17 educational programs funded, two were pilots programs: Sparcling Clean, Sparc and Capital College Preparatory After-School, Springfield Urban League. There were also three programs receiving first-time funding: Achieving Academic Success, Rutledge Youth Foundation and the Springfield Urban League's Wee Grow and Freedom School programs.

United Way funding comes at a critical time when many social service programs are trying to address greater community needs with slimmer budgets. All United Way funding is made possible by the generous donations of individuals and companies who participate in its annual fundraising campaign.



★ illinois report 2011

Col Steering Committee Chair Harry Berman and Program Director Stacy Reed co-authored a chapter in The Illinois Report 2011 on the Continuum of Learning and other local and national education issues. The Illinois Report is an annual publication by the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs that examines the state of Illinois' performance on several critical issues. To view the report, visit www.igpa.uillinois.edu.

★ financial aid guide

In addition, the Col partnered with the Business Education Partnership to prepare and distribute A Local Guide to Financial Aid Resource Information for High School Students that was sent to area school districts in November 2010. The document can also be viewed under the "Resources" tab of www.bepsc.org.