

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

REPORT 2016

Community Conversations provide us with public knowledge that allows United Way to further engage the community, find new partners, develop strategies for improvement and mobilize resources around our community's most pressing issues.

Community Conversations are a strategy for public engagement developed by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, a model used by United Ways all over the world.

OVERALL COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS THEMES

	Aspirations	Barriers	United Way's (UW's) Current Work on this Theme
A Violence-free Community	Safety for children, families and the elderly. A safe place for children to play with no drugs or violence. Space for everyone to live a secure and quality life.	Community members do not feel safe walking around their neighborhoods. Poor community-police relations and unbalanced media portrayals of violence skew perceptions and cause elevated feelings of fear and hopelessness.	UW has partnered with Aurora Health Care on a funding mechanism around sexual assault, focusing on boys & men, and human trafficking. UW is a proud member of the Human Trafficking Task Force, has staff that sit on the Office of Violence Prevention steering committee and act as commissioner for the City of Milwaukee Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. UW also hosts the Guns, Grief & Grace strategy meetings. Finally, UW has partnered with Precious Lives to bring live shows about gun violence to local organizations.
Equity & Inclusivity	A community that works together to reduce racism and segregation and increase mutual understanding. All community members know what resources are available, where to find them, with equitable access to resources for all.	Lack of access to educational and job opportunities. Knowledge of resources and a lack of culturally competent resources are a barrier to success for everyone. Segregation and racism cause isolation and division among community members.	An equity lens has been applied to UW's overall evaluation methods and grant-making, reassessing what makes a "quality" program. UW has added a Director of Innovative Strategies for Boys & Men of Color to oversee work around racial equity. Programs such as Healthy Birth Outcomes and Readers United work to equitably provide resources to the community. To date, 48 UW staff members have participated in the YWCA's Unlearning Racism program, and the internal Diversity & Inclusion committee continues its work to practice equity and cultural competence in all areas of UW's community work.
A Clean & Green Community	A clean community with safe, green spaces that everyone can enjoy. A community that works together to maintain these spaces and keeps them clear of drugs and violence.	A lack of collective effort to keep streets and parks clean. Not enough outdoor spaces where children can play without the threat of drugs or violence. Disconnect between neighbors causes misunderstanding and fear of coming together in public spaces.	UW recruits hundreds of volunteers to participate in cleaning, beautifying, and improvement projects at our agency program partners and surrounding neighborhoods. Volunteers also build "Born Learning Trails" in parks around the community where kids can play and learn. UW has partnered with the NFL and Kaboom! to conduct community playground rebuilds. The Summer Reading program brings together community partners to provide free books and learning activities to children in local parks.
Community Connectedness	A community where people respect, know, and feel safe being friendly to one another.	Segregation and racism cause isolation and a lack of connection between neighbors of different backgrounds. Feelings of fear and hopelessness to affect change cause community members to avoid working together to overcome obstacles. Isolation, feelings of hopelessness and disconnection also result from a lack of fair and balanced media reporting.	UW is exploring an opportunity for a community-wide anti-violence and anti-hate campaign. Storytelling is a strategy UW uses to help fight preconceived notions and misconceptions around need and to illustrate that community issues do not recognize county lines, race or income levels. Volunteer projects such as Project Homeless Connect bring people of different backgrounds together through the common interest of improving the quality of life in our shared community.

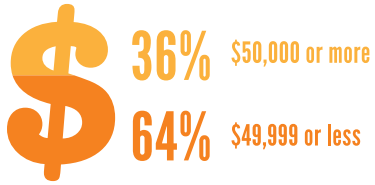
WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The overwhelming response across all conversations was that the community needs more people who are informed, care about the issues, and are willing to work together to take action. The majority of participants said the local community, volunteers, and the collective "us" are the people they trust to affect lasting change.

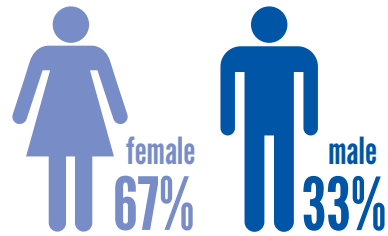
DEMOGRAPHICS

Between January 1 and December 31, 2016, United Way held 30 Community Conversations with 331 participants from 70 different zip codes. Participants ranged in age from 12-95.

INCOME



GENDER



ETHNICITY

47%
Caucasian/White

37%
African-American/Black

10%
Asian, Native American,
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or Multi-racial

10%
Hispanic/Latino



*Total percentage does not equal 100 because we allowed participants to check more than one box.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS & COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

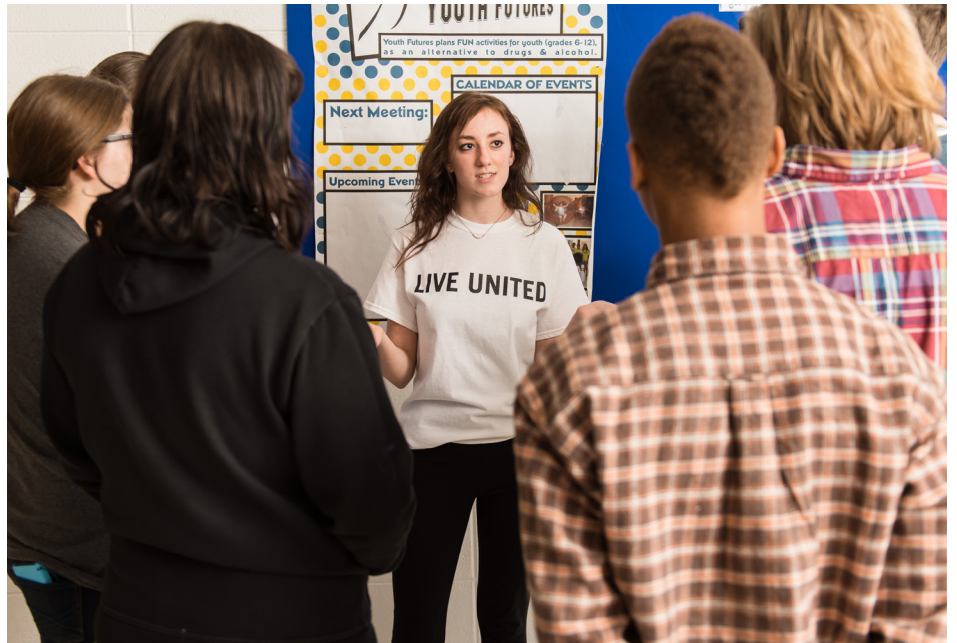
The Milwaukee Community Schools Partnership is a collective strategy to transform schools into a place where students, families, staff, and the surrounding community can work together to ensure that every student is successful.

Community Conversations are used to identify school and community aspirations and barriers to success. The themes below will be used to drive local school action plans, mobilize people and resources around shared priorities, as well as informing overall initiative goals.

A total of 56 conversations were held with 580 individuals across a variety of groups at the following Community Schools: Auer Avenue Community School, Bradley Tech High School, Browning Elementary, Hopkins Lloyd Community School, James Madison Academic Campus, Lincoln Avenue School, and South Division High School.

The following themes emerged across all conversations:

- A violence-free community
- Need for improved communication between administration, teachers, students, parents, and community members
- Lack of connectedness between school and surrounding community
- Need for improved parental engagement
- Need for more resources; awareness of and equitable access to resources
- Cultural competence and respect for diversity



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