

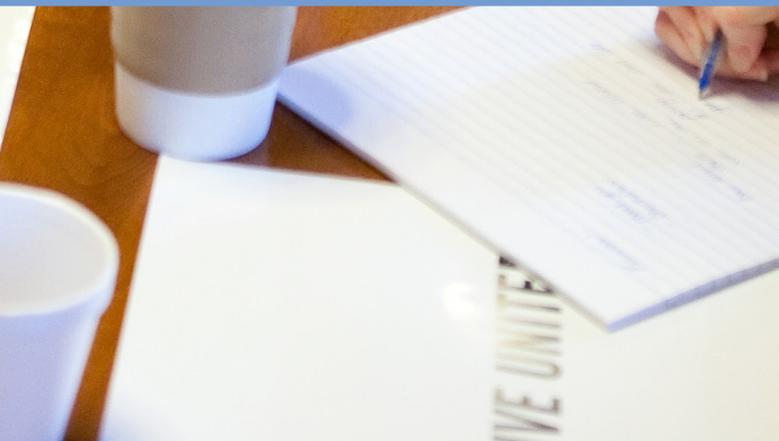


# 2013-2014 Report Community Conversations

United Way Worldwide and its network of more than 1400 affiliates have a powerful partnership with The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation. Founded in 1989, The Harwood Institute is a national nonprofit organization that teaches and coaches people and organizations to solve pressing problems and change how communities work together. United Ways around the world have integrated Rich Harwood's community engagement approach into their daily work.

The Harwood engagement strategy for "Turning Outward" includes Community Conversations, which are kitchen table style conversations designed to generate Public Knowledge that is used to inform decision-making of all kinds. United Way of Racine County's goal for Community Conversations was to talk to as many residents as possible to learn their hopes, concerns and aspirations for the community. As United Way continues the work of advancing the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all, "Turning Outward" will ensure that United Way of Racine County's impact on education, income and health is deeply rooted and in alignment with the aspirations, concerns and needs of the residents of Racine County.

*"There are some tremendous examples of what The Harwood Institute has done for other large national organizations like the Corporation for Public Broadcasting... If we can replicate what they have done for them at some level then we will be in really good shape." - Stacey Stewart, U.S. President, United Way Worldwide*



United Way  
of Racine County

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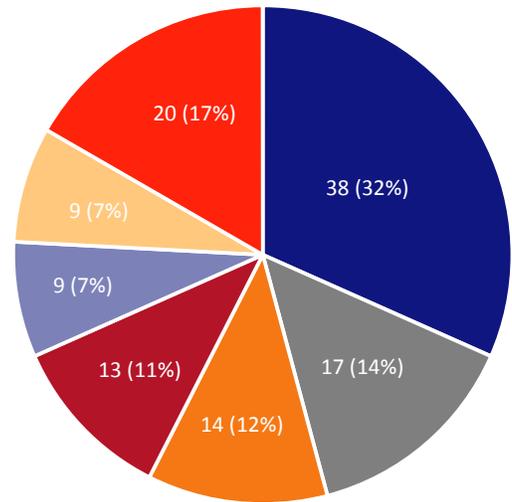


# Community Conversations

## OVERVIEW OF PHASE ONE

From November 2013 to May 2014, United Way of Racine County (UWRC) hosted its first phase of 13 Community Conversations with 120 participants from the following groups: UWRC partner providers, collaborative partners in Western Racine County, collaborative partners in Eastern Racine County, Advancing Family Assets participants, women, African Americans, college students, high school students, senior citizens, Hispanic/Latino community members, and Western Racine County school district staff. UWRC “Turned Outward” to engage the community and learned:

- People’s aspirations for the community;
- People’s concerns;
- How people think and talk about a given issue in relation to the community;
- The changes needed to reach our aspirations for the community; and
- What people believe UWRC can do, and who they trust to take action.



- UWRC Partner Provider
- African American
- High School Students
- Other\*
- Hispanic/Latino
- Seniors
- Burlington Area School District Staff

\*other includes UWRC’s collaborative partners, AFA participants, women, and college students.



*“When people and organizations turn outward, efforts to solve challenges have a much greater chance of having a lasting impact, generating more support and resources, and creating a community that is better equipped to sustain the change – and tackle other challenges.”*

- Rich Harwood

## FINDINGS FROM PHASE ONE

By engaging the community, UWRC gained valuable Public Knowledge that will inform our work moving forward. Additionally, we will share this knowledge broadly with key leaders and decision makers to take collective action and affect change in Racine County. The themes that emerged will help inform how we engage current partners and the community, find new partners, develop strategies, and mobilize resources. Below is a summary of the collected Public Knowledge organized by major themes, aspirations of community members, barriers, and what is working well in the Racine County community.

## PARTICIPANT REACTION

*“I would like to thank United Way for taking the lead on hosting the Community Conversations. The Community Conversation that I attended was well planned and allowed participants to voice concerns and comments about the communities that they live and work in. I believe in and support the new direction of United Way of Racine County. This direction is what the Racine community needs to once again become the greatest city in Wisconsin to raise a family and contribute positively to society. It is exciting to have Rodney Prunty’s direction and leadership on a solutions-focused approach to the Racine Community.” – Nathan Thompkins*

## PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE

MAJOR THEMES	ASPIRATIONS	BARRIERS	WHAT’S WORKING
<b>Safety</b>	Safe, youth-friendly community was highly valued.	Particularly concerned with safe outlets for youth around their neighborhoods. Crime, drugs and gangs mentioned repeatedly as barriers to safety.	People care about the community and law enforcement is more engaged in the community.
<b>Education</b>	Quality education system where children graduate and stay in the community after graduation.	Graduation and post-high school educational attainment were critically important issues. Participants correlated poor educational attainment with low employment skills. Expressed a need for families and the school system to work together.	Education is viewed as a priority. Schools and community leaders are working collaboratively to make improvements.
<b>Sense of Community</b>	Connectedness among people and organizations.	Consensus that people and organizations are disconnected and the community would benefit from more collaboration and better communication.	Racine is thought to be a caring and giving community. Some strong agency partnerships exist.
<b>Employability of Workforce</b>	Lower unemployment rate.	Participants cited low skills, the economy, job loss, and a lack of opportunities for ex-offenders as barriers to employment.	There are many resources to help people in Racine County.
<b>Image/ Reputation of Community</b>	A better image of the community and expansion.	Overall, there was strong sentiment that there are many natural resources in the community that make it appealing. Despite this, participants expressed that the image and reputation of the community negatively impact economic development.	Racine’s location, parks and lakefront make it an attractive place to live and work. Cultural attractions, low cost dining and social outlets are also a benefit.
<b>Leadership</b>	Diverse and engaged leaders who work collaboratively.	Generally, participants expressed concern about the lack of leadership in Racine County. Participants expressed a need for leaders who are diverse, engaged and support change.	Participants expressed that they are comfortable talking with the Mayor, law enforcement and elected officials.

# Community Conversations



## NEXT STEPS: PHASE TWO

Public Knowledge gained from the first phase of Community Conversations will be shared with community leaders and key decision makers. Additionally, the information will be integrated into the development of UWRC's strategic plan, which will be completed by September of 2014.

Community Conversations will be a permanent practice of United Way of Racine County. Facilitating Community Conversations on an ongoing basis allows us to stay in tune with our community's rhythms and the aspirations of residents of Racine County.

From August 2014 to April 2015, UWRC will host its second phase of community conversations and seek to engage with an even broader segment of the population.

## GLOSSARY OF HARWOOD TERMS

**Aspirations** – hopes or dreams for the community.

**Public Knowledge** – deep knowledge about the community gained from engaging with people around their aspirations, their concerns, and how they see their community. Public Knowledge is in plain language that everyone can understand.

**Turning Outward** – a reorientation toward the public that makes the community and the people the reference point for getting things done.

**Community Rhythms** – the stages of community life and the implications for developing strategies that fit the community.

**Public Innovator** – individual who holds ideals that guide him or her; who is pragmatic in his or her work; and who understands what it means to take risks.

## GET INVOLVED

You can get involved in the next phase of Community Conversations by:

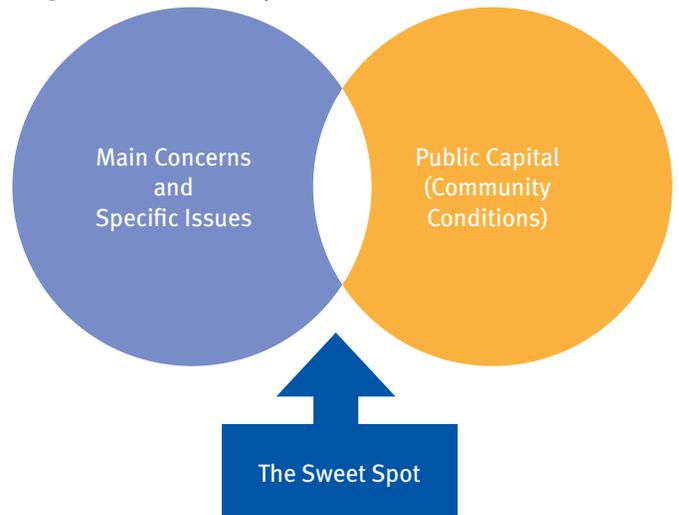
- Participating in an upcoming conversation.
- Hosting a conversation at your organization.
- Helping us spread the word.

For more information, please contact Kimberly Payne at [kpayne@unitedwayracine.org](mailto:kpayne@unitedwayracine.org) or 262-898-2257.

*"Community is a common enterprise. We can't go it alone."*  
- Rich Harwood

## THE SWEET SPOT

UWRC will focus on specific issues and align our work while building relationships, leaders and networks. We are committed to working in the "Sweet Spot" of Public Life. The "Sweet Spot" is where action is taken on issues the community cares about in a way that builds the conditions for change in the community at the same time.



*"Public innovators are the leaders that move our communities forward. They come from nonprofits, businesses, government, the media, and educational and religious organizations."* - Rich Harwood