



VISIONEERING
WICHITA

**Visioneering Wichita
Family Strengthening
Meeting Notes ~ December 7, 2010**

Attendees: Roderick Harris, Tricia Thomas, Teresa Cook, Connie Zienkewicz, Walter Thiessen, Sandy Pickert, Sherdeill Breathett, Wendy Munday, Kathy Hannemann, Bill Cook, Rick Sahatjian, Diane Sherwood, Shelly Duncan, Rev. Dale Fulton, Rachel Gordinier, BreAnn Collins, Michael Blubaugh, Martha McCabe, Kate McPheeters, John Walker, Gordon Rogers, Aaron Scharenberg, Greg Black, Emily Lies, Kelly Hayes, Barry Davis, Marla Canfield, Tracy Clarke, Hilary Koehn, Jean Anderson, Shantel Randolph, Dan Lord, Kristen Whitney, Tonya Ross, Jon Rolph, Mike Duxler, Suzie Ahlstrand, Diane Longfellow

First Things First

Julie Baumgardner with First Things First in Chattanooga, TN joined the meeting via conference call. She provided background information on First Things First a not-for-profit organization dedicated to strengthening families. It is a community resource that collaborates with and is supported by a broad cross-section of community organizations, groups and individuals. Their ultimate goal is for people to have healthy relationships.

www.firstthings.org

Q&A with Julie

Q: Starting a grass roots effort – what are the obstacles and suggestions on moving forward efficiently?

A: *Moving forward:*

- There are so many resources available
- First Things First University
- Other entities that have done this have a willingness to share

Obstacles:

- Media misinterpreting research
- Nay sayers – stay out of our business
 - o People do want information and help
 - o Good books with research – Case for Marriage, Promise I Can Keep
- Nay sayers – try to get them to talk about areas they are not about
 - o They are about healthy relationships not abortion, same sex marriages
- Obstacles can derail you – stay true to your core values

Q: How have you worked through agendas, territorial issues?

A:

- Emphasizing they are not here to reinvent the wheel
- Share information, collaboration
- Very intentional – together we can do more
 - o Collaboration with Chick-Fil-A, date night, 2400 people participated
- Always looking for ways to engage other entities to do the work they do
- They have unique classes and messaging
- Turf issues exist – take things can agree upon and move forward

Q: Diversity – have you been able to connect?

A:

- Work with a very diverse group
- Facilitators have to understand the community

Q: Was this your brain child?

A:

- Business men brainstorming about what they could do as community leaders
- Root of the problem – what's happening or not happening with our families
- Good research indicating marriage matters, family matters

Q: What is the role of business?

A:

- Business plays a very important role
 - o Sponsor activities
 - o Give information to their employees
- Families in distress results in lack of productivity in others around them
- It costs a company \$8-10,000 per year in lost productivity
- Relationship skills for home are transferrable to the workplace
- Seeking partnerships not handouts

Q: What are the lengths of your workshops?

A:

- Current grant requires they teach 8 hour classes
- The idea is to keep them wanting more; keep them engaged
- Getting ready to offer on-line classes

Take Aways from Conversation with Julie

- You can make a difference if you work together
- Intentional impact on the community culture – messaging and education
- Partnerships & collaboration – work on what can agree upon
- Working on all areas of marriage
- Very specific on strategies
- Doesn't have to be a formal setting
- Short, strong, to the point
- Community awareness
- Correlation with poverty
- People do want education
- Research based
- Importance of business leadership
- Importance to business
- Launched with funding
- Not led by volunteers – 2 positions
- Fundamental community change happens as a movement rather than a law
- Community leadership
- Community values – this is what it means to live in this community
- Website learning
- Focus about looking from business perspective rather than religious issue
- Government subtle message – take class and marriage license costs less
- Health benefits as well as economic

- First Things First – healthy relationships

Next Steps

Who else should be involved?

- SRS representative
- People with resources when the time is right
- Crisis family centers
- USD 259

The alliance leadership team meets to set the agenda for the next alliance meeting. Anyone interested is invited to join.

Leadership Team meeting: December 15, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. at the Chamber

Alliance meeting: January 11, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at the Chamber