

**FAMILY – C.A.T. MEETING**  
**September 19, 2006**  
**6:30-8:30pm**

In attendance

Ty Cliffl  
Tanya Coughlin  
Alex Ramos  
Oztavia Rodgers  
Mary Jo Schwartz  
Toni Gelsomino (poor excuse for a secretary!)

The group revisited YMP and the structure of planning process

We began by brainstorming what it takes for families and children to “thrive”

0-5 years children need:

- To be accepted and appreciated (valued) for who they are to support successful mastery of each stage
- Individual attention and attention to individual needs
- Advocacy by trusted adults
- Adults to love them and keep them safe – more than just their parents
- Play
- Opportunities for creativity

6-10 years:

- Individual time with adults
- Voices for the family
- Advocacy by trusted adults (took from “belonging”)
- School based social skills groups
- Adult role models

11-14 years:

- Advocacy by trusted adults
- Trusting relationships with parents
- Individual attention with parent or primary adult
- Follow up to “belonging” – random parent support and education programs – to thrive we must recognize that parents raise their children differently and therefore different kinds of programs are necessary

There must be supports in place for a child who is not in a healthy family situation, but who wants to make different life choices than what they have experienced.

### 15-18 years

- Strong committed adults at home, school (i.e. parents, siblings and extended family)
- Student activities
- Peer leadership

### 19-21 years

This is a mixture of “belonging” and thriving – please separate as you remember and I will make changes.

- Age appropriate skills, responsibilities and rules
- Ability to make decisions
- Sense of well being of self
- A place to be a productive and/or contributing part of community
- Relationships
- Facilities that meet social and/or education need
- Resources in place to support young people – those who would like to continue their education in college, and those who have other goals, and those who are trying to figure it out
- Social and emotional health support

Themes that became apparent –

#### **To thrive all children need:**

- To be accepted and appreciated (valued)
- Time with adults individually and in a group
- Advocacy by trusted adults, their parents and others
- Trusting relationships
- Concrete age appropriate resources
- Social and emotional supports
- Developmental and appropriate places to grow and thrive

### **All parents/families need:**

- To be accepted and appreciated (valued)
- Advocacy
- Appropriate resources to support individual families beliefs and choices

The following statements are broader and the group seemed to agree that these were important for all families and children.

Stronger neighborhoods (connected to each other)

Stronger community

Strong relationships within family and without

A variety of supportive resources – sometimes offering anonymity

We closed with brainstorming – some ideas:

- A giant resource guide book – in various places throughout the City of Lakewood
- A training program for community members (maybe starting with school and city employees) about the YMP and the vision and the critical importance of commitment to what “belong” and “thrive” mean for families and children. (to begin to institutionalize the process in all thinking) Those folks would then sign a contract that stated they would commit to the vision (and that the vision would impact their work and decisions). This might be done annually with public awareness of the process.
- Schools use community members as advisors (for school clubs and organizations)
- A place that would be a cleaning house for information - community, neighborhood, faith communities – lists of resources.
- Resources for teachers to learn to support kids, where they are

Other comments:

- Need big commitment from schools – teachers, all staff
- Parents are children’s first advocate – they need to be empowered to share what is “good” about their child
- Need commitment to family/children in community and individually
- Must support different family structures
- Everyone needs relationships to thrive

The following are results from the Family CAT... Rating Lakewood's' Common Vision for Youth

- Overall in your city how strong is your current vision? (2)
- Where do you think the vision should be in one year? (3)
- Where do you think the vision should be in five years? (5)

Do you feel that your city's YMP team has a concise but compelling vision statement? Yes

Has your city made an attempt to quantify the challenge etc?

In the works (data gathering by U of Akron student and future questions to be determined)

Given what Lkwd is trying to accomplish, how important do you think it is to have a common vision for youth? 5+

Given what you feel Lakewood is trying to accomplish, how important do you think strengthening the common vision for youth should be in the next 9-12 months? (5)

Next steps to move closer to a common vision

- Research component (data, assessment, etc.)
- Getting the word out
- Move toward concrete recommendations
- Relationships (I can't remember what else we said about this – can anyone?)
- We need to call other members of the Family CAT to check on availability for future participation
- There seemed to be consensus that everyone wanted to do something "concrete" – less talk, more work

Again – please take a look at these – add, delete as you remember things. Information bumps around in my head anymore and sometimes I am not sure where it comes from! Frightening and dangerous!

Good News! Ruth Gordillo has agreed to be our other co-chair. Thank you Alex and Thank you Ruth!

Next meetings are Tuesday, October 17, 2006 and Tuesday, November 21, 2006. We will let you know location as soon as possible.

**TONI WHAT TIME AND WHERE**

