

1/30/25 LBCAY Stakeholders Meeting

WELCOME

Present: Tess Center (Birucan), Story Tapestries, Identity (Jacob), and Civic Circle (Conner)

- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of this meeting is to give an overview of the ENOUGH program. Recently, CHEER was awarded the ENOUGH initiative Grant through the Governor's Office of Children. However, CHEER is just the quarterback for this grant. There is an entire coalition of nonprofit, government entities, businesses, and community members involved behind the work for this project.
- The group does an exercise where everyone shares one talent or skill that they are willing to share. After the exercise, Vanesa brings up how CHEER uses an asset-based community approach. When we have new community members, we talk about the skills that they would like to share. Sometimes people think that the stuff they do is not talented and some people are scared. There are things we have in the community, but we do not realize the potential there.
- Seble: Because we know that we have new members here today, Bruce will talk about the outcomes and goals for LBCAY. Currently, we have a MoCo grant that we have had for the past few years. We did not get a new grant for this upcoming year. However, we currently have a legacy grant. We do not know the status of that grant going forward. We are hoping we get an extension for LBCAY as we await the Council to approve the budget.
- Over the past year, we have been doing exploration clubs. Jacob (here) is part of Identity and is doing the college and career readiness portion of that club. Passion 4 Learning is doing the financial literacy portion. It is also a 6-week once a week program. We picked these topics because during the LBCAY assessment, this is what youth expressed that they wanted. We will do another assessment soon to see what youth will want. In the financial literacy portion, they learn about money, credit, and investing. In the college and career readiness portion, they learn things like building a resume, applying for college, and how to apply for a job.
- Question Story Tapestries: How do you promote and who do you promote to? Seble: We send a flier out on listservs, Mailchimp, and social media. We focus on Long Branch and Takoma Park residents. Students come from schools Eastern, Blair, SSI, Northwood, and Takoma Park Middle School.
- Seble: Right now, we are talking to the Civic Circle about future programming. We are excited for the future!

ENOUGH Initiative (Bruce)

- The State of MD General Assembly passed a law that was introduced by the governor. It was for place-based holistic initiatives that will eliminate childhood poverty. Governor Wes Moore used to be associated with the Harlem Children's Zone. They identified a specific place in Harlem to create a Cradle to Career approach. The State had put out a NOFO. CHEER applied as a place-based holistic approach. We needed to partner with a place-based school. We partnered with Rolling Terrace and New Hampshire Estates. 3 kinds of grants were available to apply for. We are in tier 2. This is the planning grant. We get 18 months to create an integrated action plan for Long Branch to holistically address the issues that the community has decided is most important.
- 3 areas/phases: Cradles to career, safe and thriving communities and economic security, and healthy families
- We are one of 12 communities in the state to get a planning grant
- The goal is to have an asset map, needs assessment, and neighborhood action plan. All of this will allow us to apply for an implementation grant. Right now, there are 3 groups that each got 3 million for the implementation grant.
- The Governor calls this his signature program. He calls this his priority. The ENOUGH grant is fully funded in the Governor's proposal. This is an opportunity that will last for years.
- Story Tapestries: Is this federally funded at all? No, this is entirely State funded. There should be no issues given recent concerns with federal funding.
- In 2020 and 2021, we created the LBCAY Unified Plan. The main parts of this were vision, outcome, goals, and SMART goals. We received some funding to complete these goals. The ENOUGH funding allows us to take this to the next level with an implementation grant.
- There will be 2 tracks. Older youth and younger youth. Younger youth are elementary and younger children. Older youth are middle and high school youth. We plan to refine the LBCAY 2021 Unified Plan for the older youth. For the younger youth, we are entirely starting the process from scratch.
- Cradle to career started in Jan. Safe and Thriving communities is phase 2. Healthy families is phase 3. Each of these phases is 6 months.
- Sharp Insight is leading the analysis and packaging of the data. They will create the asset map. They will also gather a lot of secondary research. We will provide them the voices of community members, and organizations focusing on youth.
- This is a collective impact approach. We need the voice of youth! We need the direct input of youth in this process!
- Vanesa: We need to identify community leaders within the community. These people are identified through a tool called the Ladder of Engagement.
- Seble: We also need to make sure we reach disconnected youth too. We want to hear their voices too!

- Our team is called “Long Branch Thrives”. LBCAY is a part of the team for Long Branch Thrives.
- Vanesa: She brings up that some people are not familiar with the community meeting process. We make sure that people understand that their participation is important and why.
- Are you in?
 - Identity-Yes!
 - Conner-Yes!
 - Story Tapestries- Already a part of Long Branch Thrives.
 - Tess- Birucan will talk to Maureen. Bruce clarifies that Tess is already committed to this project.
- Feb 27th is the first community meeting. Pre-selected people will come to Rolling Terrace Elementary School from 6-8:30 PM. The younger youth will be part of a vision session.
- Feb 27th, March 20th, and April 10th are the 3 community meetings. The 1st one focuses on vision, the second one focuses on goals, and the 3rd one focuses on developing measures for progress. All of the meetings will be 6-8:30 pm. 6-6:45 PM is dinner.
- At our next LBCAY Stakeholder meeting, we will revise the old plan for older youth based on the feedback we collected from the community meetings. We hope to secure partners to do pilots of the plan from the youth feedback we get.
- Story Tapestries: If the grant itself is broadening the audience to younger youth, have you had brainstorming sessions to understand how to get the input of younger youth? Have you decided how young we will be getting input from? Seble clarifies that Arianna is helping to look into this for us. Right now, there is no decision.
- Story Tapestries Says that Jana Sharpe also helped them develop surveys for getting feedback for younger youth for Story Tapestries.
- Cradle to Career will focus on youth all the way up to college. The other portions will include more community members.
- Bruce: How will we engage the older youth in this process?
 - Idea: Recruit some youth to come to all meetings
 - Idea: Have a group that is analogous to an exploration club. They will help do the research for getting youth input as a project. This would be wrapped up in May.
 - Birucan (Tess Center): Disseminate information through the schools directly to find out what youth want.
 - Vanesa: Vanesa brings up how youth did a Youth Participatory Action Research Project (YPAR) with her. She feels this is a good idea.
 - Story Tapestries: She brings up that we should utilize the community school liaisons. Also, reach out to boy scouts and girl scouts. Look at all the youth service action groups that already exist. These are youth that are already familiar with social justice and have a community connection. Vanesa brings up that CHEER has been working with the community liaisons. Story Tapestries: If we want to do something holistically, we need to make sure we create activities to target each group. We need to think about the barriers that prevent access. A lot

of community members face challenges with coming to community meetings (transportation, childcare, etc...).

- Jacob: The best way is to work within the structures that already exist. Specifically, with the identity structure, they have a team that works with elementary and middle school youth. There are a lot of pieces that can cover those 3 phases. Right now, it is at a County-level though, there is not a hyper-focus on Long Branch. Also, he brings up incentives for the youth.
- Seble: Sees ways for everyone here to be involved here. She also brings up that the Identity in Gaithersburg won a grant as well.
- Conner (Civic Circle): Brings up how the students that they work with have a very good sample size of youth. He is trying to think about how to involve them. He actually lives in Long Branch. Just moved here though. He is not sure of the school. Working with MHP and Henderson Square Apartments. There is this community center. Also, talks about how many of the students tell them exactly what they want. Kids come up to him and tell him what they don't and do want to do.
- Story Tapestries: Has worked a lot with Rolling Terrace. Also, does some work with Oakview and New Hampshire Estates.
- Seble: You can find past notes, the unified plan, and other information under LBCAY on the CHEER website.
- Story Tapestries: Rolling Terrace has 1 of 2 Jeudy centers in Montgomery County. She also brings up the local head start programs and Centro Nia.
- Birucan (Tess) also brings up that there is an aftercare program here at the Long Branch Community Center.
- Story Tapestries: Also, brings up a group that she thinks is now named Children's Opportunity Alliance. Seble clarifies that we are connected to them.
- Story Tapestries: She also brings up connecting to faith-based organizations. Suggests that we reach out to Arianna about the MOU that Story Tapestries has with community schools. With MCPS, there will probably need MOUs to get data. Bruce clarifies that they are signed on with us. They gave us a letter of support. Hope Mcguire is also a part of our team.
- Bruce clarifies that we are working to improve the entire community, but the focus is on ending childhood poverty. We are focusing on children, their parents, and their families.

Seble Group Questions Portion:

Question 1: What do you love about the Long Branch neighborhood and its youth/families?

- Response 1 Bir- Likes the diversity and the community is very welcoming
- Response 2-Jac diversity and richness of community resources
- Response 3-vanesa diversity and friendliness
- Response 4-Diversity Story Tapestries
- Conner- Recently moved here. Liked the folk music events. People are friendly and involved. There is a sense of solidarity and togetherness.

- Bruce-Grew up in Bethesda. It was comfortable, but felt like he was cut off from the world. Felt like when he moved to Long Branch he felt like it was the world. Gets a lot more perspectives.
- Seble- Agrees. There are so many people from around the world here. Sees them all the time in the community. She also brings up how the diversity extends to how people deal with the community here. She feels at home here.

Question 2: What is one positive thing in the neighborhood that you would want to see more of as a provider?

- Response 1 Story Tapestries: Thinks we do a good job with festivals. Would like to see more health initiatives for the community.
- Response 2 Conner:
- Response 3 Jacob: Activity among service providers
- Response 4 Vanesa: Would like to see more Long Branch activities in nature.
- Bruce: Like a boy and girl scout program. Would like to see people create initiatives for themselves
- Seble: Would like to see more childcare and elementary school programs. Childcare is so expensive and prevents economic security.

Question 3: What programs do you think youth enjoy engaging in?

- Response 1 Birucan: Sports and traveling
- Response 2 Jacob: Mental health
- Response 3 Vanesa: Youth enjoy feeling empowered through programs. Brings up Power in the Park ambassadors.
- Response 4: Conner: Soccer, photography
- Response 5 Story Tapestries: Dancing
- Seble- Sometimes kids just want to talk. They like to be brought together and just talk. Vanesa brings up how youth like talking about the things that they are experts in.

Question 4: What are some challenges you think youth are facing?

- Response 1- Jacob: substance abuse & connectedness to school, community, and resources & violence
- Response 2-Vanesa: Brings up how we constantly talk about the things that they don't have. This does not build confidence for them. They
- Response 3- Conner: They can be disconnected because they do not feel like people listen to them or take them seriously.

- Response 4-Seble: Agrees with Conner. They need validation and friends. They deal with issues like cyberbullying, fights, gangs, etc... Sometimes they just need a place to go that is somewhat supervised and safe.
- Vanesa brings up how some youth have to take care of their younger siblings which prevents them from joining clubs.

Upcoming Events

March 1st, 4-6 PM- Democracy Event hosted by Civic Circle with Story Tapestries attending. This will be at Montgomery College.

Long Branch Public Library- Identity will be there every Wednesday 4-6 pm to provide direct services to youth.

Feb 19th Story Tapestries event - wrapping up photography residency with one of their people. It is at Rolling Terrace. 4 sources of youth performers from various schools. 3 sites are doing poetry. One is doing song writing. Just did a MLK performance at Blackrock with 2 artists as well.

LBCAY newsletter coming out soon! Will include everyone's info on there :)