

## **Connecting Education & Career Opportunities Community Forum Hosted by Project 20/20 February 27, 2013, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Burnham Brook Community Center**

After presentations by Laura McGuire from the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center at Kellogg Community College, Paul David from Duncan Aviation and Kara Beer from the Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce, attendees (31) were asked to work in small groups to answer the following questions: What opportunities exist locally to develop youth talent? What opportunities have you taken advantage of here or elsewhere? What additional connections could we (the community) create to bridge education and career opportunities? A recorder wrote down the ideas from members of each small group. After the discussion, attendees were invited to take part in developing youth talent and connecting education to career opportunities in our community. Attendees were asked to fill out notes cards to learn more about how to connect with education/business, participate in current programs, share ideas, offer opportunities for youth, etc. – 21 attendees filled out note cards. Project 20/20's Strategic Allies (Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce and HandsOn Battle Creek) will contact attendees to follow-up on note card responses. The notes below contain the responses recorded by each group in the group discussion.

### **1. WHAT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST LOCALLY TO DEVELOP YOUTH TALENT? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE YOU TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF HERE OR ELSEWHERE?**

- A lot of schools and non-profits are providing opportunities
- More promotion of others than a degree – a degree is good
- Need to change our culture – other than a college degree, to think there is a need for technical workers
- More than one way to be successful!
- BC Urban Connect – connecting urban youth with resources and opportunities
  - Urban youth unemployment 18-24
  - Many barriers
  - Do they know opportunities exist?
- Why aren't kids hearing the message?
- Goodwill – WIA youth program: K-12 kids
  - Social assistance
  - Over 70% minorities
- Summer youth program – basic skills, job opportunity, work skills, soft skills
- Missing K-12 perspective
- Empower parents – children will engage
- Opportunities are not affordable
- Transportation is an issue
- Stigma of CACC
- Too many small groups – many chiefs/no Indians
- No minorities in slide presentation (see themselves in presentation)
- Start Sophomore Future Track earlier – 6th grade
- If there is an interest to keep talent local – utilize local education, higher education (Siena, Miller College, Spring Arbor, etc.) – everyone focuses on WMU, etc.
- Career Center is an excellent resource for developing youth talent

- Presenter today spoke about many opportunities their companies are offering
- KCC also provides excellent opportunities for area youth
- Co-op, dual enrollment, internships
- Sprout Urban Farms engages local youth
- Victor with HandsOn Battle Creek is going to focus on developing youth talent
- Our group has taken advantage of career center, KCC, internships, co-ops, Sprout Urban Farms, RMTC, tuition reimbursement, Battle Creek Area Young Professionals, volunteering
- Art Center, KCC, Career Center, United Way, area educators – Career Days
- High school community service hours (expose students to different areas), HandsOn, internships
- Youth representation in local boards, projects, decision-making
- KCC, Miller College, Rotary (interact through Rotary)
- Talent, artistic theatre
- Skill area aspect is missing
- Generation E Institute (entrepreneurial education)
- Manufacturing is past
- Need to create the face-to-face, the soft skills and communication skills
- RMTC, Career Center
- Manufacturing has not left
- MI Talent Connect
- Manufacturing is also a life-long learning place too
- Parents
- We have to bring opportunities to the kids
- Manufacturing consortium having difficulty connecting real-life opportunities to the kids
- How can we get long-term thinking to the kids?
- United for Change with middle school kids – mentoring with business
- Rotary reading academies with Charitable Union and KPEP
- We have the advantage as a culture that we can do anything we want to do

## **2. WHAT ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS COULD WE (THE COMMUNITY) CREATE TO BRIDGE EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES?**

- Mentoring components
- I think we are on track with some current projects
- Online mentorship program through Facebook
- BCAYP offering opportunities for area youth to be engaged in the community and recruit potential members
- Career training programs to fast track to jobs outside the traditional manufacturing programs
- Exploratory programs with the resources to support development
- Quick list/links to local businesses
- More programs for junior year so you are prepared for decisions to be made during senior year
- Better communication of what is available here, how to get a job/internship
- Equal emphasis on education other than 4 year degrees
- What are other cities doing to attract/retain youth?
- Mentoring network – mentors identify themselves and area of business they have experience in - networking opportunities
- Good opportunities for artists
- Good partnership with Downtown Partnership – new gallery (Rogue Gallery)