PROJECT 20/20
Informing & Engaging the Battle Creek Area

We Champion Battle Creek
Community Forum Hosted by Project 20/20
October 24, 2012, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., Burnham Brook Community Center

After presentations by Karl Dehn, President & CEO of Battle Creek Unlimited; Erick Stewart, President of Stewart Industries; Coby Fletcher, Principal of Battle Creek Central High School; and Malyk Laws and Esperanza Jamison, Seniors at Battle Creek Central High School, attendees (76) were asked to work in small groups to answer the following questions: What positive stories do you have about Battle Creek? What successes have we had/are we having in the community? A recorder wrote down the ideas from members of each small group. After the discussion attendees were asked "Will you champion Battle Creek?" and "What can you do?" Attendees then discussed their personal commitment to champion Battle Creek. The notes below contain the responses recorded by each group.

1. WHAT POSITIVE STORIES DO YOU HAVE ABOUT BATTLE CREEK? WHAT SUCCESSES HAVE WE HAD/ARE WE HAVING IN THE COMMUNITY?

- Early Childhood Connections – connects new parents to services. Helps make sure the kids are school ready.
- Great Start Parent Coalition – volunteer group focused on parent empowerment.
- BC poised for good things
- BC should be the kind of community kids come back to after college. Seeing more young folks returning, working
- Convincing people to come here and stay here
- All of the cool things happening at Lakeview HS and Vo-ed center
- School of choice from LV to BCC
- BCC Leadership Program – trying to give back to the community, will "adopt" an elementary school and make community garden, getting involved
- Dual enrollment and program at KCC
- Legacy Scholarships
- Aviation Program with WMU and Career Center
- 21st Century Health Program
- Investments in schools
- Can now go pre-k through 16 without leaving
- Very philanthropic → foundations
- The people are great
- Scholarships offered by BC Community Foundation
- Downtown Transportation Center – great improvement
- BC Central and Lakeview – student exchange
- The 'We are One' march at Battle Creek Central
- JONAH's listening campaign workshop had a huge turn out to learn how to master sacred conversations and communication within our congregations and beyond.
- Head Start and 21st Century – working with 90% at risk students, teaching safety and how to deal with certain situations, working with whole families
- Our library system is wonderful, a gem.
- Working at Head Start assisting families and parents lacking skills and can't afford pre-school

- Battle Creek has a lot of services otherwise unaffordable
- At BCC, really focusing on the change within the students, providing student with what they need through interventions and social workers. Students see an interventionist prior to disciplinary actions with vice/principal.
- Creating a list to connect the students with outside services for them
- Tax deductions (incentives) for expanding/investing in the community
- A lot of people have a lot more confidence that their concerns are being heard, are stepping out more to communicate. Making a solid move in a positive direction. (City Commissioner)
- Great place for children to be born/support for families and children readily available, family coaches, scholarships
- Collaboration, HS successes, business successes, early development
- The Battle Creek Enquirer has made an investment to hire young reporters, has been a great voice for Battle Creek…getting out the good news!
- Gannett thinks Battle Creek is worth investing in.
- The Whole Child section representing children, families in the Enquirer
- Charitable Union, what a GREAT place.
- Parent Coalition – meets once a month teaching/supporting parents to advocate for their children and families through voting and education, etc.
- Battle Creek Math & Science Center
- Downtown and the updates (Transformation)
- United Way
- Project 20/20, Fall into the Arts, Burma Center event – multiple events in the community
- Binder Park Zoo
- Willard Library
- Farmers Market, Urban gardens (Sprout Urban Farms)
- 'We are One' march w/ Battle Creek Central
- Federal Center
- "Can do" attitude
- World Balloon Championship
- Commitment by Kellogg Company (recently K2)
- Horrocks
- The enhancements and recent success at Battle Creek Public Schools
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation and their commitment to Battle Creek
- Global Food Protection Institute
- Local foundations – Binda, Miller, BC Community Foundation, Post Foundation
- Buffalo Wild Wings
- WMU and Aviation School
- U-hauls coming into Battle Creek vs. going out
- Fort Custer Industrial Park
- Firekeepers Casino
- Linear Park, Leila Arboretum
- Selling houses to 23-24 year olds
- Good mental health system
- Kellogg Community College, Miller College, Davenport University, Sienna Heights University
- Legacy scholars and multiple scholarship opportunities
- Train station and transportation station
- Prisoner re-entry program
- Volunteer engagement (people getting directly involved)

- Michigan Youth Challenge Academy
- Salvation Army – 125 years and expansion
- Charitable Union
- Chamber of Commerce
- Leadership development
- Leadership Challenge
- CIR
- Leadership
- Hospitality, gardens, festival, historical aspects (health capital of the world). These are the things worth focusing on.
- Partnering is Battle Creek is very valuable. Junior League focuses on child abuse and neglect
- BC is the classic American city, deep roots for Kellogg Company, even with some of the Kellogg's moves, BC has soldiered on. Enjoys working downtown, job and the city
- Have lots of opportunities for families (art, music) plus easier to get to know people here. Comfortable place
- Easier to get involved in BC. People are open to taking on projects to make a difference, especially with the assistance of the Kellogg Foundation and BCCF. Like the downtown area, restaurants, City Commission taking us in the right direction
- Community is accepting and welcoming of other cultures and races. BC is a great place to start a family and a new life
- Likes the smallness and bigness of BC. It's conveniently located. Like the historical aspect of the community, likes the way the community addresses healthcare.
- Proud of BC. Had good mentors and role models who loved this community. Finds that BC's greatest assets are the friendly, welcoming, caring people. When something needs to be done, people come together to make it happen. BC needs to do a better job of telling the story of what we have done and done well.
- Student march shows collaboration is necessary, respectful "March is silent", student video effort was powerful for those students
- Chamber of Commerce vision toward regional
- BC's vast number of non-profits, resources available
- Always something new going into Fort Custer
- Good Food BC, community gardens, Sprout Urban Farms – "self-sufficient", "Victory Gardens"
- How critical it is to have a community college! Perseverance pays off, as does collaboration, especially when you start with a great ideas (took a lot of effort to develop KCC)
- Improvements in Child Development Program of KCC
- Historical value of people (W.K. Kellogg quote on "we invest in people"), good foundation for BC
- Significant number of senior student efforts i.e. internships, community outreach, advance placement enrollment
- Pride in other students efforts to organize "even young people can make this thing work"
- BC boys soccer winning schedule
- Balloon championships
- Three Pringles executives bought homes in BC
- Opportunities to work here and live here/use your resources you have
- St. Phil had 10-12 scouts become Eagle Scouts
- 100-200 jobs open now, entry level and skilled jobs in BC
- YMCA great asset, helps youth and bring jobs to BC
- Cobe Fletcher from Texas to BCCHS, great asset, keep him around!! BCCHS vs. now top notch

- Lights and fireplace/pit downtown and wave themes are cool
- Continue with the arts and bringing it here to BC
- Great to have a lot of jobs
- Vision of Fletcher needs to move to kids for downtown development
- Kellogg's buying Pringles
- Calhoun County Coalition for Inclusion to provide a strong environment for LGBT
- Youth prom, asset to the community
- Federal Center
- Global Food Protection Institute
- Hospital
- Miller College
- App for cell phone to help families and educators communicate
- Those who speak highest of BC sometimes are those who live/work elsewhere
- BC great synergy to work together
- Conversion begins one person at a time, meet someone distressed and the community turns them around
- Silent March – participation of many schools
- Peace Jam – BCCHS
- Has been a good place to get a good education and continues to be – need to promote our good stories
- North side houses have been fixed up – attracting out-of-towners and mid-income people, Wabash St. improvements
- Promote pride in sports
- Rahabing house on Ann St; thinking about moving back to downtown from Pennfield
- Rogue Gallery (by Arcadia) – Upward Bound Student involved – encourage young people through the arts
- Restaurant – Rafay-nee in old Par 4 opening soon
- Talking about race and racism – interest in Burmese community
- Young professionals group good place for youth
- Helping veterans/disabled
- Lots of momentum in the community, $92 million investment by Denso…not even in the newspaper – announced 10/16/12. It's a re-commitment, a long-term commitment
- Fall into the Arts last week. "it was cool to get to meet a lot of new people"
- 1,001 cool stories – one from this week… a professional hockey player just signed with Switzerland team. He called her to lease his fully furnished property. She has a tenant who is a new hire at BC hospital – also a hockey fan. When she learned of the owner, she was overjoyed that she had come to Battle Creek. It was like the stars aligned. She wanted to keep all of the paint and furnishings just as they are. She loved everything, especially knowing who the owner is.
- Good things in the community. One is the tech center (CACC). It gives student the opportunity to train in fields where they may want to work in the future (ex. culinary arts). Also, lots of volunteer options that kids don't know about.
- BC is a community of 50,000 people. So many things that larger cities have (ex. Arena to support conventions, linear part system going from one side of town to another, an airport, a YMCA facility that is quite nice, 5 fortune 500 companies). "small town with big city stuff"
- BC is so unique because there is a strong sense of collaboration – corporate citizens, individual citizens. "Major players" involved. Soon will be starting Big Brothers Big Sisters new program at BC Central (High School Bigs Program)

- The ongoing presence of strong, successful, top companies
- Impressed with the re-investment in the local schools i.e. BC Central. Heard many stories from older residents who had gone to BC Central during a time when it was known as an exceptional school. The perception has changed for the negative. Happy to see that the community won't give up and they will move forward with the support of the community.
- 16 yr resident – first came 15 yrs ago "Woe is us". The mood now is positive, successful. Now look to invest in the community. The most positive thing in the dramatic change to a positive attitude.
- Parent of St. Phil student who is swimming with BCCHS. Loved the spirit of people coming together and cooperation. This is home. Moved here in '97. So many buildings were eye sores, but they are gone now.
- Graduate of BCC long ago – attitude was so bad for so long. School has so many high level classes, fantastic attitudes and the students are great. If someone in a group says something negative, the other will disagree, correct them and say something positive
- Jr. at BCC – Eyes are opened to all the opportunities that community offers. The CACC, the Upward Bound Program, bring people from other schools. Happy to see students coming from other schools because BCC offers thing other schools can't. Also works with BC Community Foundation.
- BCC graduate who moved away then returned – planned to stay only a short time but ended up calling it home. We've had tough times but we have the oldest symphony in the state. We have so much to be proud of. Women meet regularly and commit to the community by writing a check each month to support local music programs. Now there is another group too. Battle Creek is a generous community. Now a retired teacher but continues to work on projects with the school. We should be proud and spread the word.
- This is a great format, bringing people from all walks of the community sharing everything and learning from one another, able to go out and spread these stories to others.
- The paper, Battle Creek Enquirer, has such positive stories and it's difficult to get on the list of volunteers and joining opportunities because there are so many.
- Born and raised in BC, went to KCC, then commuted to WMU. Shopped downtown BC, saw the homeless and challenges over the years. Now is so happy to be part of the change and the continuing goal to evolve and change, move forward and be modern. So glad to see the big improvements, though frustrated to know some people still question or criticize the improvements to the infrastructure. So glad to see the Silent March had such a strong impact on the attitudes in and around our community.
- Born and raised in Plainwell, knew BC was all manufacturing by reputation. Never thought BC was the place to "live" just work. Now, after 2 yrs of husband's support, has discovered the good people, how much the Superintendent of BCPS is enthusiastic about the schools and their growth. So proud of the Silent March, sent the links to friends and family across the states and Europe! Love to see the positivity!

2. PERSONAL COMMITMENT – WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Champion the schools
- Take responsibility for the community – take pride and show it
- Show peers what it means to be a good person and be a leader even if they don't want to get in front of others.
- When you see something, say something. See something good – share it!
- Role model for children!
- Keep the 'We are One' campaign going strong!!
- Continue to rally people together and train leadership

- Keep the students aware of what is happening in the community and challenge them to use their talent for the good.
- To find out what organizations are serious about, what they do, commit, and participate whole heartedly.
- Keep spreading the word on how important our smallest community members are and how important it is to support and encourage the families.
- Champion downtown
- If you create positivity, it's catching!
- Health promotion
- Teaching kids the "basics" to make it in life
- Promote getting to know each other – especially Burmese
- Urban farms
- Education, especially whole child programs which can transform lives. All success needs the good background from birth – 6 years. Everyone wants something better for their kids. Let BC be known for excellent education
- Positive announcements on Non-Profit Alliance website
- EVERYBODY add "I Champion BC" at bottom of every email
- Add positive message of BC on every Urban Gardener column in Shopper News
- "3 Good Things" – continue morning routine of sharing 3 good things with students
- Find a way to make all regional organizations and people more cohesive; we need to help and work with all local municipalities to ensure all become more successful. Maybe start by re-branding BC Downtown "civic district", "cultural center"
- Get the news out we are here and we do good stuff/get involved in all the great
- Make sure homes look nice
- Take pride in community
- Facebook page
- Everybody pitch in and help
- Connections
- Need to make the community aware of the ongoing investment of major companies in this community (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, letters to local officials in government, media releases). Media needs to do better with making audience aware that these companies are creating jobs here. This would help recruit workers and improve the morale of citizens.
- Students will start small and grow by working with school
- Will continue to go to 20/20 meeting, learn about events, activities.
- Join/volunteer when possible
- Students need skills that allow them to stay in BC or Michigan at least. Students would like to better understand how to develop, where to go to stay here
- Joining in lots of groups and meeting. Joining the Leadership Team at BCCHS. This group volunteers and works with the community. Continue to come up with creative ideas to bring everyone together. Find ways to spread the word about the new businesses and job available.
- Continue to scan 20/20 emails for opportunities to participate
- As an RN, hope to gain some ideas tomorrow night at the infant mortality concerns discussion