



Proposal:

Community Conversations: Growing Goshen Together Fall series, 2019

Background

The Goshen Community Relations Commission (CRC) and the Goshen Community Schools (GCS) began conversations in 2018 to brainstorm possibilities of partnership toward building bridges between diverse groups in Goshen community. Recognizing a changing demographic in Goshen, and diversity of all kinds throughout the city, they saw an opportunity for promoting tolerance, understanding and gratitude for all people. This led to the imagining and realization of a pilot community conversation, *Growing Goshen Together*, April 25, 2019, held at Goshen High School. Responses from that event called for more conversations, which led to the current series proposed by CRC and GCS.

Goal

Through healthy conversations about issues facing the Goshen community, CRC and GCS hope to continue fostering relationships across diverse populations of Goshen.

Series Overview

A series of six community conversations will be held at various locations throughout the city, each addressing a different theme that arose from the pilot conversation in April. To maintain a sustainable pace, the six conversations have been divided into two sub-groups, a Fall series (September, October, November) and a Spring series (between January and April). Each conversation will aim for a target population of between 125-150 people and will be publicized broadly throughout the Goshen community. Furthermore, partner organizations and key stakeholders unique to each conversation and theme will be invited. Many of these partners have already expressed interest.

All six conversations will be hosted by Jes Stoltzfus Buller, a skilled facilitator with significant experience in collaborative group dialogue, and will be held in World Café format. This method of small group, round-table discussion offers an intimate setting that invites curiosity and helps build relationships while allowing space for everyone to speak.

Interpretation will be offered at each table between English and Spanish so that participants may share in whichever language is more comfortable. All information and introductory comments will be provided in both English and Spanish.

Detailed Fall Series

A culture that learns: Our schools and community together

Date: September 26, 2019; 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: Boys and Girls Club

Summary: This conversation will offer the opportunity to learn from and with the community's schools, which are home to embodied diversity in Goshen, lived out in practice every day. This conversation will focus on what is going well in our schools and where growth is needed. How can our schools better serve the population and what is their role in the larger community?

Potential partners: Boys and Girls Club, Horizon Educational Alliance, ECo Sistema, Michiana Rentals Association, Goshen Youth Arts, GCS Parent Liaisons, Bethany Christian Schools, St John's, Jobs for America's Graduates, Homeschool community

How Goshen grows: Balancing power and raising up leaders

Date: October 24, 2019; 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: Shanklin Park, Schrock Pavilion

Summary: This conversation will address leadership and power in the Goshen community context. Participants will have the opportunity to speak into successful balances of power and how that is created as well as look at challenges to equalized power. How does one access power and how does the community grow capacity and leadership so as to provide opportunity for shared power?

Potential Partners: Political parties, City department heads, Council members, GCS School board, GCS School Administration, LaCasa, Jail Ministry, Homeless coalition, National Immigrant Justice Center, Sheriff, County Council, community organizers, The Source of Elkhart County, Horizon Educational Alliance

Who is Goshen: Telling our stories

Date: November 14, 2019; 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: Boys and Girls Club

Summary: This conversation will provide space to get to know others in the community by listening and sharing about identity and the experiences that shape who each person is. How have our experiences shaped our values? Bridging divides requires knowing one another – can we learn to know each other and move from strangers to friends?

Potential Partners: Historical Society, Mosaic, Goshen College, Maple City Health, Center for Healing and Hope, Northern Indiana Atheists, Goshen Ministerial Association

Spring Series

The Spring series will consist of three conversations, whose date and specifics are yet to be determined. Based on the information gathered from the pilot conversation, the topics will center around the following three focus areas:

- *Paying attention to discrimination*
- *Engaging with Police*
- *Understanding religion and government*

Action plans

The facilitator will write a report from each conversation, gathering the table notes, harvest comments and post-event surveys. The report will include highlights from the conversation about themes that emerged as well as ideas or recommendations made. This information will serve as a springboard for the creation of an action plan in each area. Representatives from CRC, GCS and Goshen City will create a core action team and for each conversation/theme, participants and key stakeholders will be invited to join. This team will evaluate the report and will come up with concrete next steps and follow-up plans.

Budget

Through partnerships with other organizations, facility costs and catering costs will be covered outside CRC. This leaves the budget for CRC strictly to facilitation costs and advertising costs. Jes will charge \$1,500.00 to facilitate each conversation, totaling \$4,500.00 for the Fall series. This cost includes time preparing for the event, meetings with the planning committee and CRC, set-up and clean-up, facilitating the event, material costs, analysis of material from each event and preparation of reports. The estimated cost of advertising is \$500 with an extensive plan for disseminating information in numerous outlets throughout the city. Sharon Hernandez will manage the advertising costs. This totals a budget of \$5,000.00 for CRC in the Fall series.

Measures of success

We will analyze success through qualitative and quantitative measures, most of which will be collected in a post-event survey each participant will fill out. The following outline the measures of success:

- Number of people participating (125-150)
- Level of diversity present (Race, ethnic, political, economic, gender, income, age and sexual orientation) should, at minimum, mirror that of the community
- Key stakeholders present (qualitative)
- Participant willingness to recommend or come back to another conversation
- Ideas and recommendations distributed to stakeholders and followed-up on over a period of time
- School board/administration and City Council/City offices taking action related to ideas and recommendations from the community conversations