

FOCUS ON POVERTY 2001-02

Improving by the Numbers

FOCUS AREAS for 2001 Delta Strategy Dialogue/Action Groups

About this "FOCUS ON POVERTY"

Measurement drives and reflects community action.



This "Focus on Poverty" pullout gives you a quick look at the short-term progress being made in reducing poverty in our community.

Worthwhile goals include relevant measurements to help us know that we're on track to reach our goals. The measurements outlined in the larger 'Report Card' are long-term in their design.

However, *short-term successes need to be identified and shared.* We want to see that progress is being made. We want to know that families and individuals are moving toward economic self-sufficiency... that companies are partnering and developing creative ways to remove barriers to employee economic success...that community collaborations can have an impact on poverty.

WHAT IS THE DELTA STRATEGY?

A not-for-profit, community-driven organization, The Delta Strategy is a network of community members, initiatives and organizations driven by a *common vision of a community that works for each of our residents.*

The Delta Strategy is currently engaging the community in exploring the impact of poverty on all of us and identifying the resources that encourage and enable economic self-sufficiency.

In learning how to successfully tackle this issue we can develop broad-based problem-solving skills and communication links to help us address other problems more effectively.

WHY AN INITIATIVE ON POVERTY?

Poverty is a root cause of other social ills.

The Delta Strategy initiative on poverty is a 'demonstration project' to show what can be achieved when social agencies, business, government, and ordinary citizens work together, communicate openly, challenge each other's assumptions, focus on root causes and dare to dream.

All of us are impacted by poverty, whether we know it or not. When one Kent

County citizen lives on the economic fringe, our whole community -- each of us -- is diminished.

Most people in poverty don't want to be there. Many times they simply lack skills or are unaware of help available to them.

Whether it's a person caught in the cycle of generational poverty or a member of the working poor, feelings of hopelessness emerge.

The Delta Strategy is confident that, through its collaborative dialogue/action groups, our common vision of *a community that works for each of our residents* will be achieved.



WHAT IS A DELTA STRATEGY DIALOGUE/ACTION GROUP?

In order for our community to come together to solve the tough problems related to poverty, the Delta Strategy formed citizen groups to focus discussion on both the problem and possible solutions. We chose to call them Dialogue/Action Groups to make sure that they understood that their charge was not only to discuss, but also to identify and implement actions that would move us toward solving the problem or obstacle. The first groups began meeting in the spring and these groups decided upon tangible, measurable goals that can be used to chart the progress of their particular initiative. Those measures and baselines are shared in this pullout.



Keep this pullout (Pages A thru D) and review it to get a better understanding of how poverty impacts all of us.

1. JOB SKILLS AND ACCESS TO SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
Expand the knowledge and use of employee-supportive practices and linkages to resources by area employers.

2. EDUCATION, LITERACY AND ENGLISH PROFICIENCY
Coordinate and market ESL programs to businesses requiring vocational English.

3. AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, QUALITY CHILDCARE
Determine the need for childcare in a southwest Grand Rapids industrial area; develop ways to align the need with existing resources.

4. ACCESSING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
Prepare relatives and aides who provide childcare to link the families they serve to community resources.

5. MANAGING HOUSEHOLD FINANCES
Develop a plan for financial skills education for community members in the Grandville Avenue Corridor.

6. EDUCATION
Assist members of the North American Indian Community in developing a mentoring program for their high school students at risk of dropping out of school.

7. TRANSPORTATION
Assess need and if appropriate, develop a plan and resource support for express or van service between Grand Rapids and northern Kent County.

8. HEALTH CARE
Develop a plan for expanded low cost / no cost eye and vision care for low income seniors and other targeted groups.



Many Hearts, Many Minds, One Future.