

THE WEST SIDE: A Community Alive with Learning where Youth Develop their Potential and Become Productive, Contributing Adults

Early 2008

Mid 2009

2010-2012

Place Matters

BENCHMARKS:

- Many place-oriented learning activities, in various sites for youth of all ages.
- Create materials explaining activities.

ASSUMPTIONS: Learning locally makes learning real. This community contains a wealth of resources for practical and imaginative learning.

BENCHMARKS:

- Many youth cross boundaries to use school and non-school learning sites.
- Several learning activities feature West Side history, environment, economy, and culture. YAP operates robustly in the neighborhood.

ASSUMPTIONS: Partnership with East Side will reveal new possibilities and limits of place-based learning & work. Learning locally builds local citizenship and leadership.

BENCHMARKS:

- West Side people, places, organizations, stories and issues are prominent in many learning and public work activities.
- Many people and organizations do things to sustain and build the riches of the neighborhood.

ASSUMPTIONS: Dense networks of relationships exist. More people live more of their lives here.

Engage Youth As Full Participants

BENCHMARKS:

- Mapping resources for and with youth.
- 450 youth per year sample NLC activities; 200 are frequent participants (30+ sessions/year).
- Learning site leaders begin to co-create a youth organizing model that is attentive to cultural values & resources.

ASSUMPTIONS: Learning sites must engage youth. Youth engage when they feel valued and welcomed to co-create.

BENCHMARKS:

- Many programs offer opportunities for youth to plan and learn co-creative roles.
- Some programs change as youth wield more voice.
- Youth have more conversation with various adults about their possible futures.

ASSUMPTIONS: As kids show up and get to engage as planners, their imagination & vision for themselves and their world will expand: they can imagine more future options for themselves.

BENCHMARKS:

- Youth are planners and leaders in many learning/public work projects and in local organizations.
- Youth have rich networks of relationships and envision powerful futures.
- 275 youth are frequent participants.

ASSUMPTIONS: Conversations about future happen early & often in kids' lives. Youth have a rich variety of role models visible and accessible to them.

Expand the Circle

EXPAND THE CIRCLE - BENCHMARKS:

- 3 NLC working groups are meeting regularly with robust agendas.
- Group members know the NLC's core values. They engage outsiders in a dialogue about the NLC.
- Identify and connect with stakeholders in community through community-based learning and school-based learning (businesses, houses of worship, libraries, rec-centers, & schools). Recruitment brochures are distributed at these locations.

BUILD CAPACITY - BENCHMARKS:

- Learning sites keep accurate, unduplicated attendance records.
- NLC can access school data on students progress.
- Use dialogue within groups to build capacity.

ASSUMPTIONS: 3 Working groups are active in creating, coordinating, documenting, and reflecting on learning activities. We must learn more about creating conditions that attract youth to engage.

EXPAND THE CIRCLE - BENCHMARKS:

- Several people and institutions from diverse sectors are now contributing/participating in various roles.
- More learning events are accessible to families.
- Many people engage in "Community Connector" work and it is built into a number of people's job descriptions.
- Flexible funds are available to support new ideas.

BUILD CAPACITY- BENCHMARKS:

- More people can connect their institution to the larger community.
- Young people and community members are gaining skills.
- Regular learning conferences draw in people and fuel learning.

ASSUMPTIONS: Working groups have a culture of learning with regular reflection, evaluation, visioning, and leadership development activities. More resources are invested in "Community Connector." Agency staff, school educators, and residents/parents respect differences and learn how to work together. East Side Learning Collaborative will generate new insight and possibilities for expanding the West Side NLC circle.

EXPAND THE CIRCLE - BENCHMARKS:

- Many people and organizations, diverse in culture, age and orientation, co-create and sustain local learning and public work programs.
- "Community Connector" work is ongoing with funding & support from several institutions.

BUILD CAPACITY - BENCHMARKS:

- A culture and infrastructure that supports the ongoing growth of skills and capacity exists.

ASSUMPTIONS: Youth workers, school-based educators and local organizations share a vision of what it means to be a youth on the West Side. These institutions collaborate often on learning/public work projects.



**THEORY OF CHANGE
WITH ASSUMPTIONS DEFINED**
West Side Neighborhood
Learning Community