

NORTH THURSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Community Conversations
Critical Thinkers & Solution Seekers
Tuesday, October 22, 2019
5:30 p.m.
John W. Gott Administrative Center

School Board Vice President Mel Hartley welcomed the attendees to the district's fourth Community Conversation. She introduced the members of the School Board and noted that President Newkirk was stuck in traffic, but would be joining the conversation soon. This evening's community conversation aligns with the District's Strategic Plan Goal 3; Critical Thinkers and Solution Seekers; Every student will demonstrate skills in creative and evaluative reasoning, communication, and collaboration to address challenges in a socially just and democratic society.

Vice President Hartley introduced the evening's panelists:

- Chris Woods, Chief Executive Officer – Boys & Girls Club of Thurston County (BGCTC)
Earning a B.A. degree from Central Washington University in K-8 Elementary Education and K-12 Special Education, Chris Woods most recently served as Assistant Superintendent for the Tumwater School District. He brings to BGCTC a long history of commitment to youth and community collaboration through his experiences as Teacher, Principal, Coach, and Administrator.
Raised in Thurston County, his commitment to youth and the community are evident in his having attended Olympia schools as well as 20+ years of experience and expertise serving youth of all ages and grade levels. He has also served as a Board Member for the Briggs YMCA and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western Washington; a coach with Thurston County Youth Football League, South Sound Baseball, and the YMCA; and a volunteer with Greater Olympia Young Life and West Olympia Rotary.
- Jennifer Burbidge, Director of Parks & Recreation – City of Lacey
Jen Burbidge graduated from BYU in 1992 with her Recreation Management degree. She went into this field with the intent of pursuing private recreation, but ended up falling in love with community parks and recreation after witnessing the social, physical, and environmental benefits and how programs and outdoor spaces create healthy communities. Over the past 26 years, she has managed a diverse range of recreation programs and projects in five communities prior to Lacey: Olympia, Anacortes, Federal Way, Kirkland, and most recently Tacoma – each with unique opportunities for outreach and projects. Jen also owned a marketing business, and was Marketing Coordinator for the Washington State Fair; our biggest event in the state! Her passion is leading a strong team and building relationships which increase partnership opportunities for the purpose of creating healthy community. She enjoys being in Lacey and working in partnership with North Thurston Public Schools, Saint Martin's University, Senior Services for South Sound, Lacey South Sound Chamber, Sustainable South Sound and many others.
- Kevin Reimer, Director of Athletics/Activities/Arts – North Thurston Public Schools
Kevin has over 34 years of K-12 educational experience. He grew up in Seattle, earned his under-graduate degree from the University of Puget Sound, and his master's degree in Administration from Seattle University. He has taught PE, Health, and Math and has been a Teacher, Coach, Athletic Director, Principal, and Deputy Director. Prior to working for NTPS, Kevin worked in Mt. Vernon, Northshore and Stanwood-Camano School Districts as well as 11 years with international schools in Latvia, Silicon Valley, CA, and Shanghai, China.
- Kris Shackley, Program Assistant – Thurston County 4-H Program
Kris Shackley is the Thurston County 4-H Program Assistant. She is involved in promoting 4-H and maintaining and growing positive partnerships with local organizations and the general public. She provides leadership for after-school and summer programming, working directly with youth ages 5 through 19. She is currently working with teen leaders in an after-school robotics club at a private school, and an after-school healthy living program at the ROOF Community Center in Rochester. Kris has also

been involved in 4-H as a volunteer since 2005. Her experience as a 4-H volunteer, as well as an employee, has given Kris the opportunity to personally witness the power of 4-H youth development.

- **Meghan Sullivan, Executive Director – TOGETHER!**
TOGETHER! has partnered with NTPS for 30 years to advance the health and wellbeing of kids and families. Since 2013, Meghan has co-led TOGETHER! alongside Megan Darrow, Deputy Director. Meghan has 20 years' experience in public health and social services. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Community Health Education as well as a master's degree in Public Administration. Meghan lives in Tumwater and enjoys spending time outdoors and with her family.
- **Patrick Costelo, Executive Director of Youth and Community Development – South Sound YMCA**
In his current role, Patrick supports 35 before and after school sites, 7 summer day camp locations, a robust Youth Sports league, and all other outside-the-branch programming. Prior to his move to Olympia three years ago, he spent most of his career working with educational camps, most recently as Managing Director for Galileo Learning, a fast-growing summer camp company based out of Oakland, CA, that grew to serve 65,000 children each summer. He received his B.Sc. from McGill University in Montreal, QC and his M.Ed. from Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax, NS. He lives on the Olympia/Lacey border with his wife and two boys.

Mel Hartley thanked the panelists for spending the evening participating in the Community Conversation and sharing their information with the group. Ms. Hartley explained that for the moderated panel there would be a series of questions with two minutes allowed for each response. In respect of everyone's time and to keep to the agenda, Mr. Oliver would act as timekeeper and give the panelists a notice as their time was up to wrap up their response. Mel Hartley then began by asking Mr. Costelo the first question of the evening.

Question #1

How has your organization supported youth in either school or community based activities?

Patrick Costelo responded that the YMCA runs a lot of youth oriented programs, both for the schools and in the communities. In the majority of the elementary schools in the area they operate a before and after school program called *Y-Care* as a safe place for kids. Their program serves between 400-500 kids in North Thurston Public Schools. They also operate a really robust youth sports league with a main focus on character development – it's one of the leagues that both young kids and teens can participate in without worry of try outs – everyone's welcome and there is a wide variety of skill set. They also run a lot of programs designed to close the achievement gap. The flagship program that they operate in that area is called *Power Scholars*. The program is operated in North Thurston Public Schools and in Olympia School District – they have offered the program in Tumwater as well. The program is free to families and is designed for kids that are both behind grade level and are low income. The program is targeted at those students to help close the achievement gap. They offer some smaller niche programs as well such as *Youth in Government* that is popular at a state wide level, although the delegation here is smaller than it could be; and they are continuing to imagine new programs designed around healthy living, social responsibility, and youth development.

Vice President Hartley commented that many of the school board members had the opportunity to visit the *Power Scholars* program at Lacey Elementary over the summer and the energy and positivity were really very cool.

Meghan Sullivan shared that TOGETHER! is 30 years old and for all of their 30 years they have partnered with North Thurston Public Schools – they have a long history of partnership. Over the last six years they have partnered on *Clubhouse* (before and after school programs and summer programs). For the first five years there was a partnership in three elementary schools that were higher need in both academics and free and reduced lunch (lower income) schools, and then in the last year they added two middle schools to that. This year their program is in four schools due to some changes to the main funding for the program (which is state funding). The before and after school and summer program work is project based learning – so it's an opportunity for kids to try their hand at things like robotics or they've partnered with engineering firms that will come in and have

their young professionals roll up their sleeves and build bridges out of popsicle sticks and do some applied learning. There is a large emphasis on student choice and student voice – centering young people in making decisions about what they want to learn about and how they want to learn. Something that TOGETHER! is really proud and excited about is over the last two years they've built a dual language to a bilingual program in Spanish and English starting in Lydia Hawk Elementary and extending to the Chinook Middle School program. One thing that's been great about the way TOGETHER! does business is having robust partnerships and conversations with the other groups on the panel such as the Y and B&G Club and many, many others to make sure that more kids are served through the variety of programs that other organizations offer and that TOGETHER! offers.

Mel Hartley congratulated Ms. Sullivan on the big new grant and noted that TOGETHER! is doing great things.

Kris Shackley shared that in the general community 4-H has many, many clubs and many projects – not just livestock and animals, but STEM, arts and crafts, or baking – that are available to every child no matter what their demographic or where they live. If you can't afford to join 4-H they make sure that they give kids the money so that they can join 4-H. They work with the community – the Y, and TOGETHER! in some of the after school programs that they have – they've had healthy living programs with both of them and they are currently offering a robotics after school club at a private school. She works with two teenage boys who attend NTHS in the robotics club. She noted that she likes to have teens work with her. She has programs in the Rochester School District offering healthy living classes and STEM programs after school. She shared that 4-H is always open to doing after school programs with other organizations and that they also have a number of curriculum and STEM kits (such as robotics kits) available to lend to programs in the community or schools.

Kevin Reimer responded that North Thurston Public Schools offers opportunities through sports and athletics, through music, through theater, academic clubs, and other clubs and activities that offer opportunities for students. In athletics, there are 23 teams at each of the comprehensive high schools during three sports seasons with an average of 200-300 students turning out each season. At the middle school level for 7th and 8th grade students there are 10 teams across four seasons and 60-120 kids per season turn out – plus intramurals mainly for 6th graders offering basketball and volleyball. At the elementary schools – track is offered for athletics.

In the area of music, in elementary schools there are before or after school choirs that are offered, middle school offers the same as well as percussion bands and jazz bands – pep and jazz bands at the high school, as well as marching bands. There is theater offered at the high schools with three performances per year at each school, there are some theater opportunities at the middle and elementary level – for example, at South Bay Elementary a partnership with the PTA provides students the opportunity to participate after school in a play. There are academic clubs offered in the areas of STEM, robotics, coding, literature, creative writing as well as other clubs. At the elementary level there were about 90 clubs last year, middle school had approximately 36 clubs, and high schools had about 100 clubs total.

Jen Burbidge thanked the North Thurston Public Schools for their ongoing partnership and the other organizations on the panel for the partnerships that they currently have with the City of Lacey. She explained that the City of Lacey has had a Joint Use Agreement with North Thurston Public Schools for approximately 45 years. She shared that the City of Lacey utilizes the school district's facilities for a lot of the community based programs. They also use their own city facilities and they have just under 1,200 acres of public park space that are used for various park programs. To answer the question of how they support youth and teens, she replied that they use the schools for some of the programs, but they are very much community based and in a nutshell they have programs, events, job experience, and volunteer experience to offer youth and teens. In the program area they offer sports, aquatics, fitness, music, dance, day camps, teen camps, trips and tours, and the Lacey Museum (which they will be beefing up their educational opportunities at). The City of Lacey has events such as the ACTivity nights at the middle schools, the Polar Plunge, Cultural Celebration, STEM Fair, Lacey Spring Fun Fair, The 3rd of July Fireworks Spectacular, The Lacey In Tune Concert Series, dances, movie nights, Arbor Day, Earth Day, National Trails Day, Children's Day, etc. In the area of job experience, they offer opportunities for teens to become lifeguards, swim instructors, day camp leaders, facilities attendants, event staff, sports staff,

etc. These are things that kids can put on their resume and get a letter of recommendation from the staff for a job well done and help lead them to other opportunities. In the area of volunteering, they offer a teen leadership group, a counselor in training program for day camp, they offer work parties in the parks, they have a Youth Historical Commissioner every year and now can run for a two year term - there is a Youth Park Board Commissioner, and then the newest thing is the City of Lacey is having a youth council shortly that will mirror and be mentored by our City Council members.

Chris Woods shared that the Boys and Girls Club is fairly new when you look at all of the services available in Thurston County. The Boys and Girls Club has been here since 2001. Their organization currently serves over 3,000 students in six school districts in the county including North Thurston, Olympia, Rochester, Tenino, Tumwater and recently started in Yelm. They operate seven clubs in those six districts and employ about 60 staff and have about 100 volunteers across all of the clubs. Their goal is to provide safe and productive before and after school opportunities for children from kindergarten through 12th grade. He explained that they do this by focusing on three essential areas: 1) academic success – their educational programs support member’s success in school and prepare them for graduation and beyond. Their goal is to be an extension of the school and an extension of the district - so that if a school and a district had more time with students what would they like to do? They like to consider their club an extension of that process to help students get across the stage. 2) The second area is good character and citizenship. Club members learn by example and experience to become thoughtful, kind, and responsible youth through a variety of programs. 3) Healthy Lifestyles is the third goal – to support member’s lifelong health through offering nutritious snacks and meals, hands-on gardening, cooking classes, games, and so on. They are looking to continue to grow in the community and be able to provide more opportunities for more youth in the districts that we serve.

Mel Hartley took a moment and shared that School Board Members are elected officials, but in an unpaid position so they are often running up and down I-5 to get to district events after work. She announced that Board President, Dave Newkirk, who had been stuck in traffic had just arrived and she was going to hand off the next question to him.

Vice President Hartley also noted that she saw City of Lacey Mayor Andy Ryder in the audience and thanked him being a part of the Community Conversation event.

President Newkirk joined the conversation by asking Question #2 of the panel.

Question #2

What are some of the challenges or opportunities for promoting youth and teen participation?

Chris Woods stated that there would probably be some common themes in the answers – but specifically for the Boys and Girls Club, resources is one of the biggest challenges. His organization is entirely dependent on fundraising, individual donors, corporate donors, and are only limited in the amount of space they have to use to serve their youth and the amount of money that they have to hire staff and to offer scholarships to youth. He stated that he felt that the Boys and Girls Club could be more efficient in planning services and this evening’s meeting was a fabulous start. He stated that he felt it was something that should be done in all of the school district’s that he serves. He shared that the Boys and Girls Club was limited in space as it relates to transportation – he noted that the school districts were great partners in transporting kids, but when there is a full bus it is hard to bring more kids. He also stated that teen retention is another big challenge for his clubs. Teen members are also the most at-risk right now so his organization is struggling to find ways to retain teen members and provide positive places for them.

As far as opportunities, they continue to have opportunities to partner with North Thurston Public Schools to serve many of the district’s homeless students and families and are creating a designated space at the Lacey Club to serve Kindergarten students. He noted that the Boys and Girls Club has started a club at Lacey Elementary to serve Kindergarten through second grade students. Mr. Woods indicated that he is also working with North Thurston to install a portable at the main Lacey Club site to separate and have two different teen

groups (one for middle school and one for high school) – middle schoolers and high schoolers don't necessarily want to be hanging out together and like to have their own space. He also shared that he is working on having a club site on the same campus as the Family Youth Resource Center that just opened and he is looking for ways to partner with them.

Jen Burbidge noted that Chris was right, there would be some repetition in challenges and opportunities from the panel. One challenge is really finding out what youth and teens want to participate in - another is getting the word out properly. She shared that although they (City of Lacey) provided a lot of opportunities – there was sometimes a great response for one activity over another, so figuring out how to get that communication and marketing out is a challenge. Another challenge is providing accessible opportunities. As many families are aware, having kids participate in after school programs is often a challenge when families have to drive across town in a lot of traffic. Jen explained that to help with the accessibility challenge she is mindful of having accessible opportunities available for families that are close to home. Resources are another challenge – making the opportunities affordable, and securing enough facility space to offer the programs that they would like to offer for the demand that they have.

Kevin Reimer started his response by sharing some extra opportunities. He shared that one of the things that the district did a couple of years ago was to add \$8,000 for each school to offer the opportunity to add more clubs by providing stipends for teachers to create new things – some of the new clubs include language clubs, songwriters clubs, or a KPop Club – having the funding available allowed students the extra opportunity to create the clubs. The NTEF also provides a partnership with the district to assist students who cannot afford to pay to play in athletics – that is a big opportunity for the students in the district to have. Mr. Reimer shared that transportation is the biggest challenge for the district to be able to offer things. Not only in the world of athletics right now – transportation is difficult to have enough busses and bus drivers to transport teams to games, let alone the road blocks that may prevent some people from being able to stay after school because they don't have transportation to get home. Other challenges include field use – the overuse that we have causes the district to have to take time to shut some fields down and that impacts the City as well as district teams – because there are just so many kids and the district wants to be able to continue to provide as many opportunities as we can by keeping the field accessible. He also noted that it is a challenge to attract and maintain leaders and coaches of clubs. The teachers have a full time job already and as much as they want to support the teams and clubs not everyone is able to do more – there is sometimes a people shortage as well.

Kris Shackley shared that 4-H is run by volunteers essentially. They can have many kids enroll in 4-H, but if they don't have the volunteers to run the clubs then they can't serve all of those interested in joining. Currently one club has over 30 kids because that club leader is the only one who offers certain projects. One of the biggest challenges that her organization faces is finding enough volunteers to meet the need of all of the kids. Another challenge that she shared is keeping the teens. She noted that WSU had completed a huge study looking at what teens want, and how they want to be communicated with, and how to keep their interest. Something that 4-H is currently working on is keeping kids involved from ages 12 up. 4-H is for kids ages 5-19 and they tend to lose them at age 12. Keeping their interest in being involved in the club is best for the teen and best for the community. Ms. Shackley shared a current opportunity that she has on working with Capital Mall for a promotion called Live 360 – the mall is opening up their space to have clubs meet there or have events. She is planning to have a STEM afternoon in January where anyone walking through the mall is welcome to come and join the 4-H group to do some STEM – coding projects. The event will be a huge opportunity for 4-H to reach more people in the community to say hey, 4-H is about... basically if you are interested in something, anything you can join 4-H and make it a 4-H project. They want to support that.

Dave Newkirk asked if there was any way to get the older students involved to volunteer with the younger students – or is that not viable?

Kris Shackley responded that one of the big things in 4-H is that the teens are considered teen leaders so they do work with the younger kids – that is the beauty of it. She shared that she raised her three girls in 4-H and when they were little they looked up to the teen leaders, and when they became teens – they became teen leaders.

Even now, two of her girls have actually become 4-H leaders. She shared that it has been really neat seeing that happen personally – seeing your children become good members of the community.

Meghan Sullivan built on some themes that had already been established. Beginning with challenges – there is more need than everyone sitting on the panel are collectively able to meet, and resources are a barrier in being able to meet those needs. The TOGETHER! program serves between 250-300 young people at the elementary and middle school level each year, and the services are at no cost to the families. Part of the funding comes from state sources and her organization is constrained in how they are able to use those funds – so resources are a challenge. Transportation costs are a challenge. TOGETHER! partners with the district to be able to get kids home. She shared that it is one of the core tenets in how they do the before and after school program and the summer program – transporting students is a significant part of their budget. She noted that one interesting thing is that although their programs are based at schools, they are serving a higher proportion of special population. That does vary by school, but some schools have a higher proportion of students who are utilizing special education services or some schools may have more students who have free and reduced lunch (which is a measure of low income status), and at some schools there is a really higher proportion of English Language learners.

Ms. Sullivan went on to share that things that are working well and offer an opportunity to build upon include their partnerships. This includes an excellent partnership with North Thurston Public Schools and she expressed her gratitude for the partnership. She shared that they have convened partnership conversations with the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club over the last year to identify where the gaps are in service - are there areas that aren't being served – and who can cover those gaps? She shared that the groups had done great problem solving and it has worked really well. She shared that they partner with North Thurston Public Schools and Family Education and Support Services to help make parenting classes happen, and that is something that all of the partners contribute to. She shared her gratitude to the City of Lacey and the North Thurston Education Foundation for contributing funds. She shared that TOGETHER! also partners with Lacey Parks and Recreation in the summer around Playground Pals. She closed by saying that the theme of opportunities is to appreciate partners and build even stronger partnerships to serve more kids and families.

Patrick Costelo noted that the first challenge that jumped to mind for him is lack of resources – particularly access to multi-year funding for some of the programs that are most vulnerable so that they can plan and project on a year's time scale instead of every couple of months. Retaining teens is another area. Teen participation seems to drop off, and he hopes to see really fun and engaging programs that teens want to be at and want to tell their friends about. He shared that he felt that what his program is really competing with isn't as much other activities as it is kids being home on their phone or playing video games or something like that – instead of being active and social and experiencing the life benefits of that. He also shared that there are real space constraints in this area in terms of gym space, particularly for the youth sports programs which has been challenging and just being at the table with everyone on the panel is a good start in how we might start to rectify some of those things. He also mentioned that they struggle with the perception of cost in their school age child care program – and a lack of awareness of the different assistance options that are available through state subsidy or directly through the Y. It's complicated because some of it is teaching someone how to maneuver through the bureaucracy and get the funding that they need to get their kid in a program that can help them work and be a contributing member in the community.

Dave Newkirk agreed that it is a challenge to get kids away from screen time and get them into activities. As a parent, that is a challenge no matter what you do every day. It is a challenge to get your student out – it's a challenge especially when it's raining out. I hope we will find solutions working together, but I don't think we're going to do that tonight.

Question #3

What are the next steps as an organization in supporting increasing the percentage of students participating in at least one positive school or community based activity?

Kevin Reimer responded that first the district will continue with strong community support – he noted that none of us are going to do this alone. In order to get this done we need partnerships. It's important to keep those strong and going and look for new ways to help each other out. The district will get better at tracking the data to make sure we are reaching all students and not leaving pockets of students out - that's important. He continued that we need to look for ways for financial support to increase too. As we encourage increased participation, that creates another JV team or another C team and that is another paid person to help out – the same with transportation. How do we continue to provide those opportunities financially as we grow, because as we grow everything else proportionally grows as well.

Jen Burbidge shared that one of the things the City of Lacey is doing is more effective community engagement. She noted that the City Council has asked that the Park Board and the Parks and Recreation Department do more robust community engagement – maybe better digital platforms. That will be one of their projects for 2020 that they will be working on so that they can find out what people really want. She continued that another next step would be to continue to build partnerships and find ways to share resources and space to collectively make a difference. Jen also noted that the City will continue to work to secure grant funding to offset the cost of programs to make them more accessible to folks – also, the City will be offering scholarships (her organization is revamping their scholarship program – the work is done and it will roll out in 2020). She also mentioned that they are looking for ways to get kids more involved and off the couch. She shared that she had recently attended the National Parks and Rec Association Conference in Baltimore and there were sessions and talk about the VR (virtual reality) world and eSports and being able to be adaptable to what the trends are. The message was if you have an open gym space that you aren't utilizing – which for us is hard to find – but to go ahead and do a VR activity, which would mean that the kids do have their sets on – but they're not on the couch at home. They are forced to interact with other kids. One of the messages at the conference was also to figure out how to accommodate eSports because it's coming – it's not a matter of if, but when. So, be ready.

Chris Woods replied that although it's been said, it needs to be said again – increasing collaboration and planning among community services to maximize participation with the opportunities that are currently available. North Thurston is a great example of leading the way. We had a situation at the beginning of the school year where the school district and the YMCA and TOGETHER! and the Boys and Girls Clubs all worked together to make sure that the schools had what they needed and that the students were going to be taken care of and had a place to go after school. We're all working with various schools and students in the community. He elaborated that the school did a fantastic job of bringing the organizations together and making sure that we weren't losing any children through the process. He also suggested surveying youth to identify challenges and needs. He felt we should take some time to dig deeper than the Healthy Youth Survey to survey students to find out what they need and what their challenges are because he believes that every youth that walks through the doors of our schools are facing challenges and are hurting. He shared that he feels that we really need to dig deeper to find out what it is that they need, and how can we provide that. Chris also shared that his organization will continue to work with school districts to streamline information and data sharing – when we are able to do that we are better able to provide what students need in programs outside of the school day – going back to the idea of the Boys and Girls Club program being an extension of the school day. If schools had more time with the students what would they want to do? The Boys and Girls Club will continue to work with individual and corporate donors, grant funders, and other community partners to generate resources long term and not just temporary so that they can serve youth and commit to programs long term. Lastly he plans to look for opportunities for evening and nights particularly for the teens – to have safe places for them to go, and provide opportunities that are good choices.

Patrick Costelo echoed the previous responses in terms of collaboration and partnerships – to provide a little bit more color in the way that he has seen some of that happen over the last couple of months, he expanded the conversation with North Thurston was a completely collaborative, multi-organizational conversation that ended with the Y sending messages to all of our Y-Care families in full support of the new organization that was taking over. The way that we all talk about each other, always being positive and assuming the best intent. Patrick also recommended being efficient with efforts and not duplicative, which could look as simple as checking the schedule of another youth sports league and making sure yours doesn't start the same week as another one is ending – but it could go much further beyond that to reaching out and not duplicating the same sports in five different leagues around the city (just as an example). He answered that in terms of partnerships, there is a ton of opportunity there, as an example when the Dispute Resolution Center in Olympia wanted to put something on for families, but they didn't have a connection to the number of families that the Y did. The YMCA sent it out the information to all of their families to leverage their base of members to get interest and the Resolution Center ran a wonderful program that they are experts in. The more that we can all do that to support each other around the table the more that we'd be able to meet the needs of the community.

Meghan Sullivan answered that a lot of it had already been covered, but building on the partnership conversations that have been going on – that's been really rewarding and robust conversation for TOGETHER! during the last year and has helped her organization be able to plan to apply for grant funding to continue and expand services and helped as one of the big grants was ending and they were not able to continue to serve at a particular school – to identify who could pick up which pieces and to make sure kids were served. She identified expanded collaboration as an area of next step to get families to exactly the service that would best meet their needs. Moving forward she noted that through the lens of TOGETHER! they do have some wait lists in some of their schools, so they are working on how to move some of their wait lists where they do have capacity and one of the sites isn't quite full – so looking out how they get to a point of wait listing at that one particular site. She also noted that in looking at increasing access looking forward, looking at determining what is the best service for each particular family – there are some family needs that are better served by TOGETHER!'s partners and some family needs that are served well by her organization. She stated that her organization is looking forward to continuing to partner with North Thurston and many of the other providers on the panel to continue to meet the needs of families.

Kris Shackley responded that a next step for her organization is improving communication with the community and the other organizations on the panel to share that 4-H is out there and available to do some programming. She also shared that it was brought up earlier in the evening – the issue of losing teens and finding out what they need and what they want, and one of the things that her organization has concluded is that we need to train adult volunteers in how to work with teens specifically and give them the programming that they would like. It's nice seeing the teens and younger kids working together, but the teens also like to have something separate. She shared that is something that 4-H is working on, and that their goal by 2025 is to have 10 million kids enrolled in 4-H.

President Newkirk thanked the panel and turned over the program to Board Member Graeme Sackrison for the Table Talk Activity.

Table Talk Activity

Board member Sackrison asked that all participants work together with their table partners to complete cards asking three questions – participants were given six minutes per question to prepare their responses:

1. What have you learned about support structures in our community around positive school/community based activities?
2. What questions do you have about school and community opportunities?
3. What suggestions do you have to strengthen support for positive school or community based activities?

Comment cards were collected and select questions were posed to the panel by Board Vice President Mel Hartley.

Questions the Community members had for the Panel

How do you get more kids involved who are not following a traditional path on to a 4 year college? A lot of kids who apply for youth positions at the City are the 4.0 students who are involved in everything.

Kris Shackley responded that there is a program called YAY 4-H – it stands for “Youth Advocates for Health” it is specifically designed for teens and they train teens to be teachers. Teens then help leaders or volunteers teach the curriculum and are paid a stipend for the amount of time that they help. The programs take place after school or on the weekend so the opportunity works for home schooled teens or teens that are currently enrolled in public or private school.

Chris Woods shared that currently about 25% of the Boys and Girls Club staff are former club kids. A lot of the kids will go from being a club kid to being a junior staff member in the summer time when there is programming all day long Monday through Friday. From there if they are successful as a junior staff member, those youth often work themselves into positions – whether it’s part time or full time. They’ve found that it is the best way for their organization to reach underserved youth because those are the youth we are serving at our clubs every day – they seem to be a very good fit for moving into positions within the organization and many have worked on to full time positions and even administrative positions within the organization.

Meghan Sullivan commented that one thing that has worked well for TOGETHER! is to work to recruit and retain staff and volunteers that are representative of their community and those that they serve so that when people see folks that look like them or have experienced some of the same life circumstances as them, they really feel at home and welcomed in their spaces.

Patrick Costelo replied that the Y has lots of volunteer opportunities and there is a lot of opportunity, in the summer especially, to expand their volunteer opportunities for teens to come and have a mentorship experience at one of their camps – many hands make light work.

Jen Burbidge shared that the programming staff at the City of Lacey stay in contact with the school counselors, but they want to do more and better outreach and are open to suggestions if there are ideas out there.

For the 4-H program, do you have to have an animal to participate? If so, are there grants or other financial assistance for low income families?

Kris Shackley responded no – you do not have to have an animal to participate. 4-H does everything from pigs to sewing and baking. If kids can’t afford to join 4-H there are scholarships available. A lot of clubs provide assistance too, for instance if a kid wants to join a horse club but doesn’t have a horse a lot of the volunteers work really hard to make a horse available to ride and show at fair. There are always ways- you just have to, as a parent, be honest and persistent about that.

How has poverty limited kids and parents participation? How could or would more volunteers help with resource avoidance?

Chris Woods shared that the Boys and Girls Club serve a lot of families that qualify for free and reduced lunch or the McKinney Vento program. One way that is unique that they’ve been able to serve them is a partnership with North Thurston Public Schools - in the past many homeless students would get on a bus after school and they would stay on that bus until the bus driver finished their regular route; and then after that those students would be driven home, which in many cases was temporarily outside of the city maybe in Tacoma or Shelton. In a partnership with the school district the kids are now dropped off at the Boys and Girls Club directly after school and then the busses return around 4:15 or 4:30 and take those kids directly home. This program is very unique to North Thurston Public Schools – to be able to serve those children at no cost – they come to the club; they get to be a normal kid; get help with their homework, get a snack; they get to play games; they get to have

fun – and all that the kids at the club know is that some kids get picked up by cars and some kids go home by the bus. The unique partnership has allowed us to eliminate that barrier and serve more youth than we would normally.

Meghan Sullivan answered how poverty is a barrier for access – she noted that one thing that is distinct about TOGETHER!'s offering is that there isn't a fee, so in that sense it isn't a barrier – but there are barriers because as Chris said some of the students that they serve are homeless students which presents a unique challenge in transportation. There is also the problem of mobility. With homelessness, if a student wants to stay in their home district – the district supports that need; but sometimes folks cannot stay where they are and so they are building these great connections with all of these organizations that they are connected with (and the adults) and then they are uprooted because somebody got a job in Tacoma and they are moving. That is hard for the kids because they are not attached to the adults that they have built relationships with and they are not attached to their home community.

How do we reach kids and families that are currently being missed?

Chris Woods commented that previous to his current position, he spent 22 years in public education and something that we've all learned is that we cannot expect all families to come to us and we cannot expect all families to read, listen to, or see our communication to them. As much as possible we need to find ways to go to the families and find out what the needs are - and go to the youth and find out what the needs are. He shared that he didn't think that we could expect many of the families that are facing those challenges to come to us.

How do you get communication for opportunities and activities and how can we increase communication to teachers, principals, vice-principals (especially including life-skills teachers who work with our special needs students)? How do parents reach out who do not have internet? How can we create an infographic and get the word out? Websites or other resources that your organization has found to be successful?

Kris Shackley responded that for 4-H cost is a big thing and trying to reach school districts is very difficult for their organization because they have to pay to advertise programs. If they could somehow get away from that and have a direct contact with somebody within the district or we wouldn't have to pay for Peach Tree or however that works for her organization that is a huge thing.

Vice President Hartley then moved on to the suggestion cards with the prompt:

What suggestions do you have to strengthen support for positive school or community based activities?

Have these entities (organizations) considered developing a shared community calendar?

Panelists all agreed that would be something to consider.

What keeps you from designing/running your program(s) to be youth-led?

Kevin Reimer responded that many of the North Thurston Public School's clubs do come out of ASB. Many times, at the middle school especially, you will see a group of kids approach a teacher with an idea for a club – it isn't a teacher starting a club; it's a group of students who want a club so they find a teacher that they connect with to get them to help start the club or be the supervisor for the club. A lot of things happen that way in the schools – it's not always adult down, most of the time, especially in clubs, it's student interest first then the club becomes a reality.

Vice President Hartley then returned to the community member questions regarding school and community opportunities:

How can the district's new mentorship program collaborate with this work?

Chris Woods mentioned again how the Boys and Girls Club program wants to be an extension of the school day, and one of the things that they work with for the teens is their High School and Beyond Plan which many of them start at 7th grade, some start at 9th grade. The Boys and Girls Club organization sees it as their

responsibility to help the students get plugged in with the community - whether it's an internship or volunteer opportunity – again really being an extension of the school day - to try and get the students across the stage, but not just the graduation stage- also setting them up for success as we move forward. We've found that many of the students who attend the Boys and Girls Club would be great working in the trades and we know that right now that is the biggest need. They can't fill jobs – so that mentorship, that partnership to be able to connect our youth with businesses - whether it's volunteer opportunities or internships or even just mentorship many of the students can walk out with some sort of certification or maybe even get a job or at least some guidance on where they want to go next. He stated that he could see a lot of applications for the program especially in the teen centers in each of the districts that his organization serves.

How do students with disabilities who ride a bus access these activities?

Kevin Reimer responded that the school district provides transportation for everybody. Sometimes if you don't know, maybe that's an area where we need to collect better data from students so see if that is an area that is a hindrance but someone hasn't asked yet.

Chris Woods added that his organization is very fortunate that in all of the 6 districts that they serve, the district provides transportation to the club so that any student with a disability would be transported to the clubs by the school district then transportation would be the responsibility of the family in the evening time when they get picked up. Currently every one of the districts is serving the transportation needs for the Boys and Girls Clubs.

Mel Hartley commented that as a board member and parent she is so excited to see the growth in not only the Unified Sports programs but the Live Unified programs that we now have that offer activities such as Live Unified Movie Night – the club builds collaboration and friendships among students with special needs and students without special needs. She congratulated Kevin Reimer for his work with that program.

What support do your organizations need to be able to collaborate with other organizations?

Patrick Costelo responded that the evening's conversation and the hosting of it is a fantastic start. Anything that could bring everyone to the room to have conversations was great. He shared that he personally was leaving with an extensive to do list of people to contact and follow-up with and he felt confident there would be action taken as a result of the evening's meeting. He's expanded that he wasn't sure what it would look like moving forward - if there could be an annual meeting or what sort system would be put into place to continue to have stakeholders in the room, but it just feels like a great start.

Jen Burbidge added that she felt supported in collaborating and she thought maybe some goals, objectives, some strategy – a plan would be good – some structure.

Ms. Hartley encouraged those in attendance to participate in some of the amazing fundraising events that the groups on the panel hold during the year and thanked the panel for their participation and thanked all of the panelists for the amazing work that they do in the community. Vice President Hartley then introduced Chuck Namit for Closing Comments.

Board Member Chuck Namit thanked the audience members for their attendance and participation. He reviewed the topic of the evening's conversation Goal 3: of the Strategic Plan, Critical Thinkers and Solution Seekers; Outcome a. Increased percentage of students participating in at least one positive school or community-based activity and thanked the panelists for joining in this effort. Mr. Namit explained that the school board and district administration will review the notes that were provided during the evening's conversation then the Board will take steps to introduce changes and enhance the district's program.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.