

*Fox Cities Project Promise Poverty Coalition*  
Zion Lutheran Church  
September 14, 2011 - 11:30am-1:20pm

Meeting Summary

**Call to Order:** The Fox Cities Project Promise Poverty Coalition meeting was called to order at 11:50 a.m. by Jon Stellmacher, Co-Chairperson.

**Invocation:** Jon shared a message from Jenni Eickelberg about letting go of the belief that we cannot do something. Relating this to Project Promise, many people think that they can't do anything about poverty because they have an old belief that one person can't make a difference. Let go of the old belief and think positively -- if everyone does just one thing to end poverty, together we will make a big difference!

**Program: Special topic - Community Forum on Childhood Poverty**

The 51 people in attendance heard a presentation by Ken Taylor, Executive Director of WCCF. Ken shared the results of the recently released national Annie E. Casey Foundation's report on "The Impact of the Recession on Children". Along with national statistics, he shared state and local child poverty indicators and their trends.

The (national) 2011 Kids Count Data Book is available at the following link:

<http://www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/123/2011KIDSCOUNTDataBook/KCDataBook2011.pdf>

A variety of Wisconsin data are available at:

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/bystate/stateprofile.aspx?state=WI&group=DataBook&loc=51&cmpid=19>

Next followed a panel of local community leaders responding to what they are seeing as a result of the increasing economic challenges faced by families.

Lee Allinger, Superintendent of the Appleton Area School District highlighted the growth in homeless students and district responses to the needs of children from families living in poverty. He noted that it takes the entire community to ensure student success.

Gayle Hardt, Vice President, United Way Fox Cities shared observations from United Way partner agencies. She highlighted some special UW programs. She pointed out that non-profits are working leaner and she noted the need for diverse revenue sources. She reminded everyone that children need stability in their lives, which is difficult to achieve when living in poverty.

Judy Olson, Executive Director, Child Care Resource & Referral, provided national, state, and local information on CCR&R. In addition to parent information and referral services, CCR&R provides extensive start-up, staff training, and quality improvement coaching to child care providers. Judy shared several examples along with perspectives from childcare providers.

Rev. Mary Beth Kovanen, Zion Lutheran Church provided a faith perspective. She noted the growing need for assistance and gave several examples of creative fund-raising and support programming. She

noted that people are willing to help when they are aware of the need. She also pointed out the value of teaching children and getting them involved in serving others. She challenged folks to look for ways to empower families in need.

In the Q&A session it was noted how important it is to maintain the dignity of those needing and receiving help.

Attendees were encouraged to share information with family and friends, share their resources (time, skills, and funds), get and stay involved, and to be a neighbor every day.

**Discussion/Action Items and Sharing of Information** were omitted due to the planned length of the special program.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, December 14, 2001 at Zion Lutheran Church

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