

Opportunities Beyond Obstacles



*“The **community** is ultimately responsible for the fate of economically disadvantaged youth...”*

2nd Annual Conference 2015

22 September

**Pyle Center
University of Wisconsin-Madison
702 Langdon St
Madison, Wisconsin 53706**

Sponsored by...

CEDEDS

Our start to a **solution** begins with...

MADISON “A LABORATORY OF CHANGE”

The Problem

There is “no state worse than Wisconsin for black children” according to a 2014 national report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation titled “Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children.”

The report shows that children of color face enormous barriers to educational and financial achievement, with Wisconsin ranking last in the disparity between white children and their non-white peers.

We Believe

The current academic trend of low achievement among the vast majority of economically disadvantaged youth is not an indication of their true abilities to learn.

An education environment free of prejudice, racism, inequities, bigotry and stereotypes should exist for economically disadvantaged youth, parents/guardians, and staff to achieve success.

Institutional Stakeholders





Develop a Common Understanding

Given the population gains during the last decade and the demographic projections going forward, it has become apparent that addressing the educational needs of economically disadvantaged children is no longer a matter of periodic consideration but one requiring immediate action. While students anchored by economic stability have achieved unprecedented educational success, educational outcomes for the economically disadvantaged student have been appalling and abysmal. Those unsuccessful outcomes can often be traced to the dearth of

understanding of the multiple factors that compose the environment of the economically disadvantaged learner. This conference will endeavor to develop a common understanding of the complexities of the world experienced by students who live in poverty.

Focus on the Causations Rather Than the Symptoms

The conference will approach the challenges of the economically disadvantaged student, from both practical and scientific platforms.

The conference will endeavor to initiate activities that will direct attention toward the root causes of the challenges faced by economically disadvantaged students via the following activities:

- Present relative observations.
- Establish tentative descriptions (hypotheses) to make predictions.
- Test those predictions by further observations, and modify the descriptions (hypotheses) in the light of the results.
- Revise description and test those predictions until there are not discrepancies between theory and observation.

Explore Opportunities to Change the Paradigm

Opportunities Beyond Obstacles will endeavor to transform the experience, wisdom and insight of our panelists, practitioners and participants into the meaningful development of a “transportable” strategy that can be utilized throughout our city, state and country.

In addition to the expert analyses and case studies, the conference will include an examination and audience discussion of how best to translate what has been learned into a series of “next steps to be conducted.



Schedule of Events

Tuesday, 22 September, 2015

On-Site Registration

7:00am – 2:35pm

Main Lobby, Pyle Center

Opening Plenary Session

8:30am – 9:30am

Alumni Lounge, Pyle Center



"City of Madison Budget Initiatives to Close the Equity Gap"

Honorable Paul Soglin

Mayor, City of Madison, Wisconsin

Paul Soglin is the 51st, 54th and 57th Mayor of Madison. Mayor Soglin's terms are noted for the balanced investment in human capital and appropriate municipal infrastructure. Whether it was the bicycle path around Lake Monona, or the Monona Terrace and Community Convention Center, or thousands of units of low income and senior housing, or neighborhood centers and community gardens, the focus has been on equity and developing a tax base that can support human services.



"Creating a Culture of Excellence and Equity: Eradicating the Deficit View in Our Schools"

Dr. Jennifer Cheatham

Superintendent of Schools, Madison Metropolitan School District | Madison, Wisconsin

Madison schools are continually striving for a culture of excellence and equity for all students and educators. Superintendent Cheatham will talk about the district's work to challenge every child through great teaching that is culturally and linguistically responsive. When schools and the community focus on the strengths of each of our students and educators and uniquely support them, they will meet the challenge.

Dr. Jennifer Cheatham is the Superintendent of the Madison Metropolitan School District. Dr. Cheatham's focus is on systemic improvement in urban school districts. Her expertise lies in developing instructional alignment and coherence at every level of a school system aimed at achieving breakthrough results in student learning. Most recently, Dr. Cheatham was the Chief of Instruction for Chicago Public Schools. She also worked as Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction for San Diego City Schools.

Break

9:30am – 9:55am

Breakout Session I

10:00 am – 10:45am | Auditorium



“Setting the Stage For Success

Dr. Janean Dilworth-Bart

Associate Professor & Chair, Graduate Program Committee, UW-Madison School of Human Ecology | Madison, Wisconsin

Children living in lower income homes have an increased likelihood of negative physical, psychological, educational and economic outcomes across the lifespan. Clearly, the risks associated with low income status are to be avoided. However, what are we driving toward? The purpose of this presentation is to distinguish between risk and resilience in the early life experiences of children and to identify individual, family, and community processes in infancy and early childhood that promote life success. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of potential strategies for positively influence life-course trajectories beginning in the first 1000+ days.

Dr. Janean Dilworth-Bart work focuses on how early developmental contexts help (or hinder) children’s development into competent individuals according to metrics that are valued by the wider society such as academic achievement. Dr. Dilworth-Bart analyses parent characteristic, parenting behavior, and home environment predictors of children’s self-regulation and school readiness using multiple methodological approaches. Her work contributes to literature about impact of immediate and distal contexts on self-regulation and school readiness.



“Early Literacy, Owning Our K-2 Data: The Story of the How Behind the Why”

Cyndy Green

Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment | Madison Metropolitan School District | Madison Wisconsin

In this session, participants will learn about Madison Metropolitan School District's early literacy data and its targeted strategy to raise achievement for all K-2 students and the closing of achievement gaps.

Executive Director Cyndy Green has spent 20 years in the Chicago Public Schools. For the past two years she has served as the Director of Literacy, focused on K-12 Literacy, Social Science, Libraries and Service Learning for all 600 elementary, middle and high schools. Executive Director Green has been a classroom teacher, reading specialist and District Reading Coordinator. Cyndy has developed the Chicago Public School plan for implementation of the Common Core State Standards. She has spent the last three years working with networks and schools to implement this plan. She also coordinated and developed the implementation of the MTSS plan and a Comprehensive Assessment System. In addition, Cyndy has coordinated the development of Common Core aligned formative literacy and social science assessments.

Break

10:45 am – 11:00am

Breakout Session II

10:00 am – 10:45am | Auditorium



“Mental Health and the Low-income Parent”

William Greer

President & CEO, Journey Mental Health Center | Madison, Wisconsin

Mental illness and substance abuse in parents and children are exacerbated by poverty, particularly in circumstances where single mothers care for one or more disabled children (Lloyd and Rosman, 2005). Living in poverty creates a stressful environment where the basic family needs of food, clothing and shelter are not guaranteed. Attending to these needs often exhausts a parent’s internal and external resources. Consequently, low-income families are disproportionately represented among the ranks of those suffering from depression, anxiety, substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The children of these families tend to do poorly in school and are often isolated from their peers due to their “special needs.”

William Greer, M.S., L.C.S.W., LP.C. is President and C.E.O. of Journey Mental Health Center. He has 38 years’ experience as a clinician, administrator, instructor and clinical supervisor. He has supervised the development of many model programs that serve individuals across the life span with an emphasis upon best practice, cultural competence, and consumer involvement. He has worked closely with private and public providers of mental health and substance abuse services, consumers, policy makers, and advocates with an eye toward increased consumer participation and access in the face of shrinking government funding and burgeoning consumer demand.



United Way of Dane County

“Working to Address Implicit Bias & Racial Disparities Through Our Agenda for Change”

Angela Jones

Community Impact Director, United Way of Dane County

Racial disparities have existed in this community for a long time; resulting in inequities among people of color in our community. Low-income people of color face the greatest challenges, institutional barriers and biases place them at a disadvantage in being able to achieve at the same level. United Way of Dane County has a long history of working of addressing the racial disparities and bias’s that keep people from progressing. By encouraging the community to work on two generational strategies (strategies that impact youth as well as their adults), we can impact the lives of low income residents and further reduce racial disparities in our community.

Angela Jones holds a Bachelor’s degree in Business Management and Professional Communications from Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Angie began her career with United Way in Racine, Wisconsin where she worked for 10 years before moving to Madison, WI in 2004. At the United Way of Dane County (UWDC) she is lead staff for the Agenda for Change area of “moving more people on the pathways out of poverty”. Angie works with the Safe Communities, Strong Neighborhood Community Solutions Team, community partners and partner agencies to ensure strong, safe, caring, economically productive and inclusive neighborhoods and communities. When she is not working at UWDC she lovingly attends to her two children, Ricki and Danielle or reading a mystery novel. Angela is the wife of Richard L. Jones. She is a graduate of Leadership Racine, was a Board member for Harbor House in Racine and taught Children’s Church at United Faith Missionary Baptist Church. She is a member of the Allied Stakeholders Group, Madison Police Department Community Against Violence, Dane County Criminal Justice Taskforce and the Downtown, Madison College Gateway to College Advisory Board and the Dane County Employment and Training Committee. She believes everyone in Dane County deserves to thrive in a safe, educated and healthy community.

Luncheon

12:00pm – 1:30pm | Alumni Lounge, Pyle Center



"Educating the Impoverished: The Role of the Faith-based Community"

Rev. Dr. Alexander Gee, Jr.

President, Nehemiah Foundation and Pastor Fountain of Life Baptist Church | Madison, Wisconsin

Dr. Alex Gee will address the historic and current importance of the role of the faith-based community concerning issues such as education, housing, employment, reentry services, mentoring, daycare, counseling and mental health. This support system can be traced back to a time in our history when African Americans lacked access to the established mainstream social services and had only the local Church to turn to. Gee's address will highlight the importance of engaging the African American faith community, if one desires to foster a healthy sense of identity, purpose, empowerment and hope. Our modern and advanced communities have seemingly strayed much too far from the strength, energy and faith of the only institution in which African Americans have ever exercised unbridled autonomous leadership. History has proven that our nation's most prolific African American leaders were identified, groomed, empowered and released, by the Black Church.

For more than two decades Dr. Gee has served as an advisor to leaders from around the world. His work as a pastor and nonprofit entrepreneur has allowed him to empower countless fatherless children, ex-offenders, drug addicts, teen parents and racially divided communities. He is passionate about promoting hope, transformation and justice for disenfranchised people. Alex is a social entrepreneur who has worn several professional hats: Family Counselor, Adjunct Professor, Spiritual Life Coach, Diversity Consultant, Community Activist, Columnist and Radio Host. Alex is the lead pastor of Fountain of Life Covenant Church in Madison, WI. In 1992 he also pioneered The Nehemiah Center for Urban Leadership Development, a nonprofit organization that inspires, develops and releases emerging African American leaders to become partners in revitalizing and transforming our community. He has studied at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Bakke Graduate University.

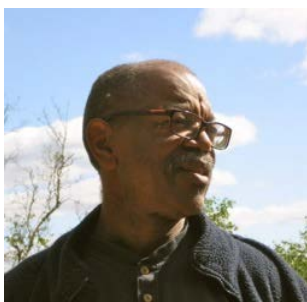
Break

1:30 pm – 1:45 pm

Breakout Session III

1:45 pm – 2:30 pm | Auditorium

The Circles of Support at Thoreau Elementary School: "Creating Conditions and Relationships for the Success of African American Boys"



Dr. Jeffrey Lewis

Senior Lecturer and Outreach Specialist for Underrepresented Communities in the department of Program Development and Evaluation at the University of Wisconsin-Extension

Dr. Lewis and his colleagues have developed Circles of Support (COS), a school-based program that creates supportive spaces for African American boys that foster mutual support, positive school identities, and school engagement, and that serves as a basis institutional change. In this work, Dr. Lewis and his colleagues use participatory and capacity-building approaches to help school staff, parents, community members and others work together to improve the social and educational outcomes of the boys.

Jeffrey Lewis has conducted community-based research and evaluation in urban schools and communities for more than 20 years. His work focuses on inclusion, equity, and institutional change. Jeffrey brings a social design and rights based approach to his work. He has a particular interest in achieving aims by identifying and cultivating existing resources in schools and communities while centering the perspectives and experiences of those most affected by issues. Jeffrey is

also involved in interdisciplinary, cross-sector collaborations in low-income urban neighborhoods that involves working with grassroots community change agents, human services, youth development specialists, schools, and various city services to address needs that the community itself identifies.

Jeffrey has a doctorate in Sociocultural Studies in Education from the University of California-Davis, an MS in Early Childhood Education from the University of Oregon, and a BA in Economics from Drury College. He has also studied theology and Christian Social Ethics in Berkeley and Boston.

Implicit Bias



Angela Russell

Manager for Diversity and Inclusion, CUNA Mutual Group

As implicit racial bias continues to gain a foothold in public discourse, the real-world effects of this phenomenon have increasingly become a topic of interest. Although operating at an unconscious level, implicit biases should not be regarded as an excuse for behavior but as powerful cognitive forces that contribute to individuals' thoughts, behaviors, and decisions.

This presentation will endeavor to provide understanding behind these unconscious mental processes and how racial can operate, regardless of the presence or absence of hostility or animosity.

Prior to joining CUNA Mutual Group, Ms. Russell was a Health Equity Coordinator for Public Health Madison and Dane County. In this role she was responsible for agency leadership, policy development and community engagement as it relates to the social and economic determinants and health equity with the overall goal of reducing the differences in health related to unequal access to economic, environmental and social conditions.

Ms. Russell has more than 13 years of professional experience involving external relations and outreach, communications, policy development, and research and evaluation.

Prior to joining PHMDC she was the Community Engagement Lead for the national County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program at the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

Ms. Russell has also worked in a variety of roles in Wisconsin state government including Division Administrator for the Division of Early Care and Education, and Director of External Affairs in the Department of Children and Families, and Policy Advisor to Governor Jim Doyle. She was formerly an epidemiologist with Wisconsin AIDS/HIV and Hepatitis C Program at the Department of Health Services.

She holds a Master of Science in Population Health from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health and a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from Beloit College.

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