

**Union County Workforce Development Board  
Adult Education and Literacy Committee  
Union County Administration Building  
Parks & Recreation Conference Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
April 14, 2017 AT 9:00AM**

**Present**

Julio Sabater, Chairman, Adult Education and Literacy Committee, Workforce Advantage  
Shirley Hollie-Davis, Union County College  
Marlene Loff, Union County College  
Jean Koszulinski, Union County Workforce Operations  
Antonio Rivera, Workforce Development Board  
Pamela Capaci, Prevention Links  
Roberto Camacho, Investors Bank  
James Horne, United Way of Greater Union County

**Summary of Themes Discussed:**

Chairman Julio Sabater welcomed everyone to the Adult Education and Literacy Committee meeting. Chairman Sabater invited all to introduce themselves and opened the floor to the business of the day, the focus on families, a discussion led by Mr. James Horne, of the United Way of Greater Union County.

Mr. James Horne shared his vision for a greater and more holistic Focus on Families Initiative, wherein all the academic, health and supportive services needed by a family group can be addressed by a coordinated team. Adult education and literacy are critical components of the effort to help families in crisis.

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- The quality of life for any community is directly connected to the strength of its families. And while the great majority of over 540,000 Union County residents are faring well, there are some individuals who struggle, families that fall through the cracks, and those communities where the basic needs of people are not being met.
  
- Knowing that all residents deserve the opportunity to live the American Dream, the Board of Chosen Freeholders in Union County and its Chairman Mohamed S. Jalloh have joined forces with the United Way of Greater Union County to launch the **Focus on Families Initiative**, to develop and implement a unified strategy to promote strong families and strong communities in Union County.
  
- The goal of the **Focus on Families Initiative** is to mobilize the greater Union County community to integrate economic development, workforce development and family support strategies to assure that all families in the County, particularly those most in need, can access the resources and support they need to most effectively raise their children to become full, responsible, productive and contributing members of their communities.
  
- **Early Childhood Success - Pre-natal to age 8**  
Goal: All young children will be safe, healthy, and ready to learn as they enter and engage in school.

➤ **Positive Youth Development - ages 9 to 16**

Goal: All school age children and youth will live in a permanent home, be in school, on track, (involved in age appropriate activities) and connected to their community.

➤ **Transition to Adulthood - ages 17 to 26**

Goal: Youth transitioning to adulthood will be on a positive pathway to economic independence and strong and responsible family and community relationships.

**Pillars of Family Success:**

- Personal Safety and Financial Security
- Family Relationships and Community Connections
- Learning and Education
- Health and Well Being

**For Each Pillar of Success:**

- What do families in each community need?
- What services and supports are available?
- How can parents be involved in local and state family success efforts through participation, advocacy and leadership?

**Family Success Approach**

- The Family Success approach recognizes that no one entity can meet all the needs of children and families throughout the various phases and stages of life.
- The approach encourages and supports the healthy development of children in the context of strong families and communities.
- The life course is broken down into areas that coincide with child development, and focus on early childhood success, positive youth development, and the transitioning of youth into adulthood, all within the context of supporting strong families and strong communities.
- Local networks of community-based, formal and informal resources, supports, and services are necessary to support the journey from birth to young adulthood, and meet child and family needs in multiple life domains.

### **Community Involvement and Decision Making**

Family Success recognizes the inherent strengths that exist in all families and strives to help families build upon those strengths through community involvement and shared-decision making with families.

Family Forums are opportunities for parents to:

- Discuss the needs of families in their community
- Learn about resources and supports that exist to support family success
- Learn about ways to serve as advocates for themselves, their families and their community

## **Values of Family Success**

- Parents and families are a child's first and foremost influential teachers - the primary source of social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual development and maturity.
- Family success is family-focused and supports the growth and development of the entire family
- Children need strong families and strong neighborhoods in order to be successful on their "journey."
- Family strengths are the building blocks of change for systems, communities, and families themselves.
- Family success focuses on providing parents and other caregivers with the skills, support and confidence to raise children that are happy, healthy, safe and secure.
- Support to families should begin as early as possible, including prior to or during pregnancy, to ensure the best possible outcomes for infants, children, youth, families and communities.
- Parents and families shall have the opportunity to access services, supports and resources in their neighborhood and in an environment that is welcoming and supportive of family success.
- Support to families must be respectful and responsive in addressing the diversity in local communities - including race, culture and ethnicity, spiritual beliefs, language, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and family composition.

- Parents and families will be included in local and state family success efforts through participation, advocacy and leadership.
- Partners in Family Success, be they formal service providers, informal resources, or community organizations, will offer resources and support to families in warm, welcoming, and easily accessible physical environments and human atmospherics.

**The Family Success Institute**

- The Family Success Institute is a NJ-based entity that originated the concept and promotes family success nationally.
- From the outset the UWGUC and its family strengthening work was a pilot and a partner with the Family Success Institute.
- Today Union County is a Flagship Community for the family success movement.

Mr. Roberto Camacho was impressed with the approach being presented and suggested to Mr. Horne that his organization should apply for a grant from Investors Bank, his employer.

Mr. Julio Sabater expressed the view that the Freeholders are wise to invest in this family success model as it has shown promise in the past. Family literacy also includes financial literacy and this is an important distinction and greater emphasis needs to place the financial side of the equation. No household can succeed unless there is a clear

understanding of the household's economic ability to sustain itself, in the same way and manner in which adult education levels achieved impacts salary earnings.

Jean Koszulinski impressed upon the committee the One Stop's intent to work with the Family Success Institute and offered to coordinate with his staff so that the participating families could take advantage of youth services as well as workforce learning link services.

Julio Sabater, Chairman of the Adult Education and Literacy Committee, thanked all the committee members and guests and adjourned the meeting at 9:30am.