



Michigan Voices for Volunteerism Muskegon – May 5, 2010

In April and May of 2010, the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC) hosted a 10-city listening tour, “Michigan’s Voices for Volunteerism.” The listening tour provided an opportunity for community stakeholders to share their thoughts on how to expand service and volunteerism to help address our state’s biggest challenges such as: hunger, unemployment, illiteracy, high school dropouts, and the environment.

Tour stops included:

- Benton Harbor
- Cadillac
- Detroit
- Flint
- Grand Rapids
- Online*
- Houghton
- Lansing
- Muskegon
- Saginaw
- Sault Ste. Marie

**More than 70 people participated in the listening tour by responding to an on-line survey.*

People who attended the 10-city listening tour represented the following groups: K-12 schools; aging networks; colleges/universities; faith-based organizations; nonprofit agencies; public safety; community based organizations; community leaders; businesses; healthcare; elected officials; concerned citizens; foundations; corporations; service organizations; state government and; media.

In Muskegon, 24 people lent their diverse voices and thoughts to discussions that centered around community challenges and how volunteerism and national service programs can be expanded and utilized more effectively to improve the quality of life for citizens in these and other communities throughout Michigan.

Listening tour participants were asked a series of questions related to communities, volunteerism, resources, capacity, national service, and impact. The themes that emerged from Muskegon’s stop are listed below.

Note: Many bullets below may be accompanied by a number in parentheses. This indicates multiple individuals/groups responded with the same/similar thoughts.

1. Challenges

What are the critical challenges or issues faced in your community? Please list.

- Unemployment (4)
- Economy/Poverty (3)
- Networks (3)
- Educational Preparedness (2)
- English as a Second Language (2)
- Teen pregnancy (2)
- Transportation (2)
- Affordable Health Care (1)
- Childcare (1)
- Dropout Rate (1)
- Foreclosure (1)
- Health literacy (1)
- Incarcerated Parents (1)
- Increased crime (1)
- Job creation (1)
- Job training (1)
- Lack of Senior Services (1)
- Literacy
- Loss of Hope (1)
- Low Self-Esteem (1)
- Relocation of Citizens (1)
- Socio-Economic Gap (1)
- STDs (1)

2. Successes

How are volunteers currently addressing critical challenges in your community?

- Youth Mentoring/Big Brothers Big Sisters (4)
- National Service (RSVP, AmeriCorps) (2)
- Read Muskegon (2)
- Community Gardens (1)
- EITC (1)
- Employment and Training – Webster House/Community Compass (1)
- Girl Scouts/Boy Scouts (1)
- Literacy Training – Adults (1)
- Medical Reserve Corps (1)
- Mileage Reimbursement for Senior Volunteers (1)
- Opportunity Initiative (1)

- Prosperity Index (1)
- Red Cross (1)
- Truancy Patrol (1)
- Volunteer Muskegon (1)
- Westshore Dispute Resolution Center (1)
- Youth Athletic Sports (1)

3. Resources

What resources are not being tapped to support volunteering in your community?

- Budget Limitations/Donations/Funding (2)
- Communication & Collaboration (2)
- Targeting Teachers/Schools (2)
- Technology/Social Media (2)
- Volunteering Matching Skills (2)
- College students (1)
- Education and Awareness of Volunteering (1)
- Highlight Benefits to Volunteers (1)
- Job Training/Resume Development Tool (1)
- Paying Service Forward (1)
- Shaping Volunteer Positions to Skill Sets (1)
- Value of Volunteers (1)
- Volunteer Activities as Team Building Exercises for Organizations (1)

4. Capacity

How do we increase the capacity of organizations to engage more volunteers and do it effectively?

- Funding/Staff Administration Grants (3)
- Volunteer Matching based on Skills (3)
- Recruitment Strategies (2)
- Volunteer Appreciation/Recognition (2)
- Volunteer Position Descriptions (2)
- Company-Provided Volunteer Time (1)
- Main Volunteer Contact (1)
- National Service Funding (1)
- Overall Promotion (2)
- Volunteer/Staff Training (1)

5. National Service

How can National Service be used to enhance volunteer efforts and impacts?

- Increase Administrative/Program Capacity (2)
- Inject Creativity & Fresh Ideas (2)
- Leverage More Volunteers (2)
- Collaboration (1)
- Communication (1)
- Liaison to Community Groups (1)

6. Impact

How do we as a community maximize the impact of volunteerism?

- Media (4)
- Volunteer Recognition/Success Stories (4)
- Express Volunteer Benefits (2)
- Collaboration/Networking (1)
- Don't Announce How Much Money was Saved (1)
- Don't Replace Paid Positions with Volunteers (1)
- Identifying Opportunities (1)
- Marketing (1)
- Outcome Tracking (1)
- Provide Meaningful Work for Volunteers (1)
- Social Networking (1)
- Tap Volunteerism as a Career Exploration & Training Tool (1)
- Volunteer Clearinghouse (1)