

INTRODUCTION

Capacity for Change, LLC, a public interest consulting firm, hosted its Inaugural Chester County Summer Camp at Temenos Retreat Center on July 23, 2009. Representatives from 35 Chester County nonprofit organizations were in attendance, representing advocacy, arts and culture, education, environmental, historic preservation, immigrant, philanthropic, volunteerism, and social service organizations.

Recognizing the stress that local organizations are facing in the midst of the economic downturn and the lack of affordable resources to support their work, Capacity for Change sought to provide a forum for networking and conversation, skills-building and peer learning—and relaxation.



Opening Drum Circle

CONVENING OPENING

The convening opened with a welcome from Meghan McVety and Jason D. Alexander, Principals and Co-Founders of Capacity for Change. Inspired by two preschool teachers who held a weeklong summer camp to raise funds for the 3 Day Breast Cancer Walk, Capacity for Change realized it could support local organizations directly through a day of capacity building and networking. Meghan explained that the Summer Camp was designed to build capacity at the individual, organizational and community levels. Often, capacity-building is understood as efforts to enhance abilities only at the organizational level. However, investing in the skills, abilities and well-being of individuals is essential for strengthening the organizations in which they work, and ultimately for strengthening their communities.

Jason shared with the group that the goal of Capacity for Change is to inspire greater community impacts through smart strategy consulting for nonprofits and other organizations that serve the public interest. The role of the nonprofits represented in the room is to make a meaningful difference in people's lives and their communities throughout Chester County. The Summer Camp is an opportunity for those two things to come together in a fun yet powerful way for the good of the sector and the good of the region.

Darcie Goldberg, Executive Director of the Chester County Art Association, a strong advocate for the arts in Chester County and a leader in the region's nonprofit sector, provided opening remarks to frame the day. Darcie emphasized the importance of the nonprofit sector in our world and the array of talents, services and resources that nonprofits bring to the table. The situation that nonprofits currently face, economically and otherwise, reinforces the importance of working together. Collaboration helps nonprofits get through difficult times and amplifies their work in good times. Chester County Art Association has engaged in numerous collaborations that have enhanced its work, including collaborations with West Chester University, Kennedy Center for the Arts, and ArtReach programs in Kennett Square, Coatesville and Exton.



Darcie Goldberg, Chester County Art Association

Darcie urged all nonprofits to explore how they can collaborate with each other to benefit the work of individual nonprofits and all of Chester County. At the same time, nonprofits must always look ahead to the future and think outside the box, try new approaches and alliances, and be willing to take risks. Collaboration begins by getting to know one another, finding common goals and needs, and building relationships. The Summer Camp is a wonderful opportunity to make connections and think about one's work in new ways.

Following Darcie's remarks, Christine Campbell and John Swana of DrumWolf Drum Circles led the group through a 30 minute meditation about the participants' organizational accomplishments, challenges, and visions for the future.

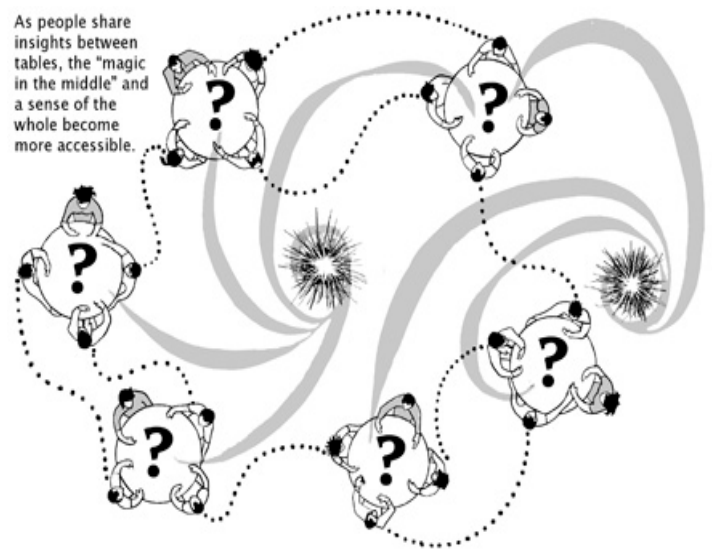
VISION FOR THE FUTURE: CHESTER COUNTY IN 2019

The main focus of the morning was the Chester County World Café, modeled on the World Café conversational process that allows for a broad exchange of ideas and rich networking. The format consists of progressive 20-minute conversations. After each 20-minute interval, participants move to new tables to discuss the next question with different participants, and one table host stays behind to weave together the previous discussion with travelers from other tables. Throughout the conversations, participants document their ideas with words and drawings on paper table cloths. In this way, common themes are identified and participants have the opportunity to meet and engage with each other.

The Chester County World Café questions consisted of the following:

1. Imagine you leave Chester County tomorrow for a new job or a decades-long global trek. You return in 2019 and all of your hopes and dreams for Chester County have come true. What does Chester County look like?
2. What role could your organization play in making our collective vision for Chester County a reality?
3. What three tangible steps could we take—as individual organizations and as a group—in the next year to make progress toward our vision for Chester County?

Participants discussed the three questions at individual tables and then engaged in a group discussion to tease out the main themes about their visions for Chester County in 2019. Following are images from the Chester County World Café.



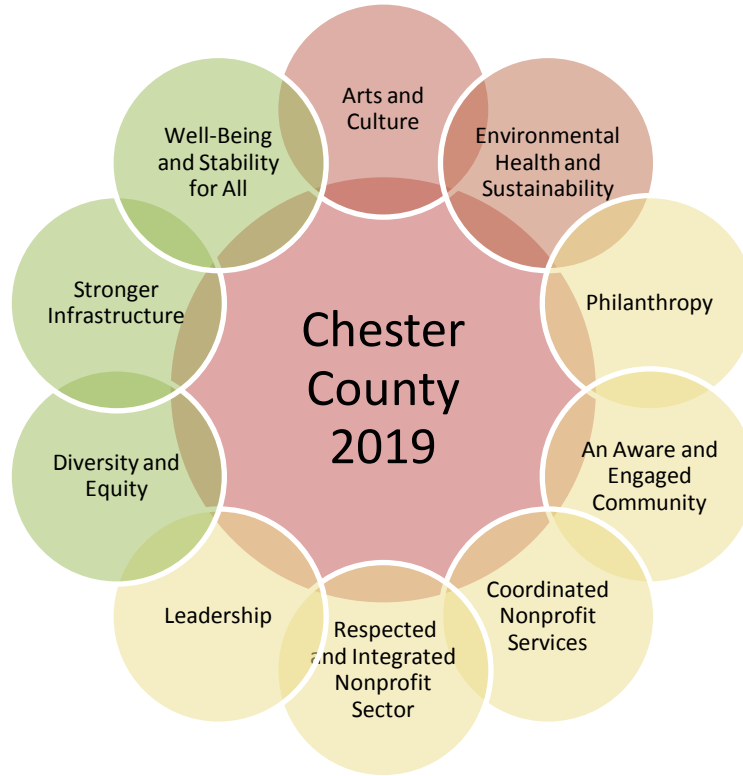


A Chester County World Café Table Cloth



Chester County in 2019

The themes that emerged reflect the depth of hope, resources and challenges in Chester County's communities. In short, the group's vision of Chester County in 2019 coalesced into ten themes:



I. Arts and Culture

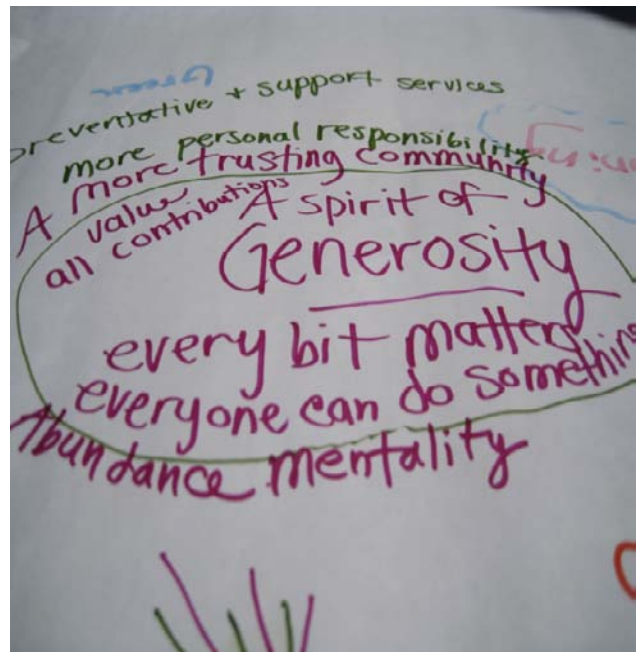
- Art mecca
- Music, dance, food
- Diversity of arts opportunities that are well-funded and attract participants
- A vibrant place to live

II. Environmental Health and Sustainability

- Brown field clean up/use
- Zoning to manage development
- Brandywine water issues
- Balance of business and open space
- Bike paths and trails
- Nature education/watershed conservation

III. Philanthropy

- Philanthropic groups coordinate resources and volunteers
- Asset value of Chester County Community Foundation is doubled
- Chester County "comfortable" community is engaged to give back and set-up funds

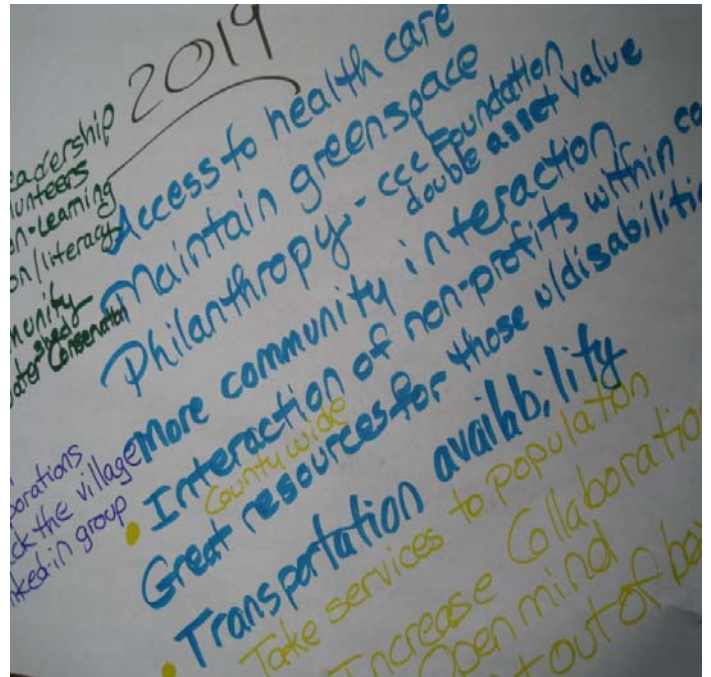


IV. An Aware and Engaged Community

- Greater awareness of neighbors' needs
- Breaking cycles
- Breaking isolation—get people out of their houses and engaged
- Increased volunteerism

V. Coordinated Nonprofit Services

- Better communication of available services
- Greater efficiencies in how nonprofits work through centralized access and services
- Services no longer operate in silos
- Community centers active and connected to each other
- More and better coordinated services for growing non-English speaking residents
- Opportunities to celebrate accomplishments

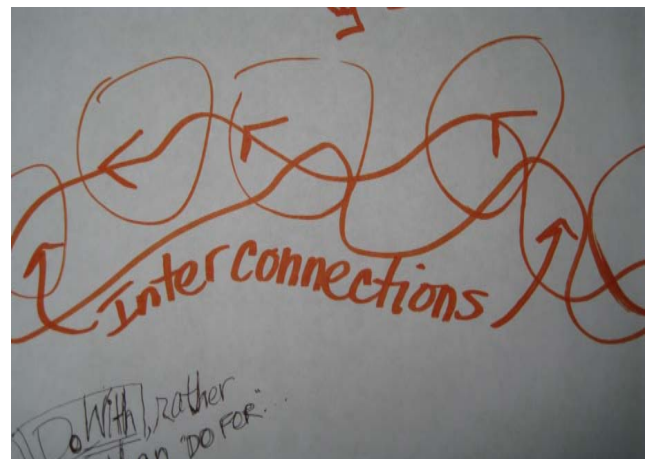


VI. Respected and Integrated Nonprofit Sector

- Nonprofits are regarded as essential to the economy and the fabric of the community
- Nonprofits are supported by increased philanthropy and resources

VII. Leadership

- Diverse leadership is serving a diverse population
- Training opportunities are available for all leaders
- New generations of leaders are supported and trained
- Youth leadership is supported

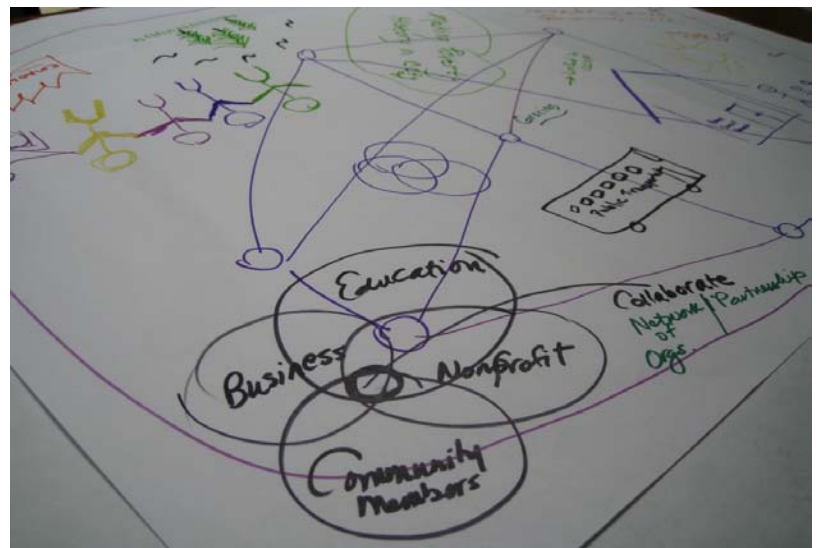


VIII. Diversity and Equity

- Recognition that greater good comes from wide diversity
- Diversity of age, gender, abilities, economics at all levels of the community
- Greater resources for those with disabilities

IX. Stronger Infrastructure

- Regional planning
- Improved public transportation
- Trains
- Libraries play a role in building community



X. Well-being and Stability for All

- No homeless people on the street
- Jobs for everybody
- Affordable housing
- Affordable health care
- Affordable mental health care

Tangible Steps toward the Vision

Participants discussed the tangible steps they could take to make progress toward their vision for Chester County.

1. Connect Different Sectors

- Breakdown silos (i.e., chambers, United Ways, etc. work together)
- Connect businesses, funders, nonprofits, community members
- Engage Chester County Chambers

2. Promote the Nonprofit Sector

- Educate the public by reframing nonprofits as essential businesses
- Visit and share with other nonprofits
- Provide and advocate for capacity building for the sector
- Collaborate and share resources
- Fertilize philanthropy
- Educate staff on available resources
- Unite nonprofits to lobby for impact
- Improve communications (website, database)
- Discuss who can coordinate this effort

3. Promote Volunteerism

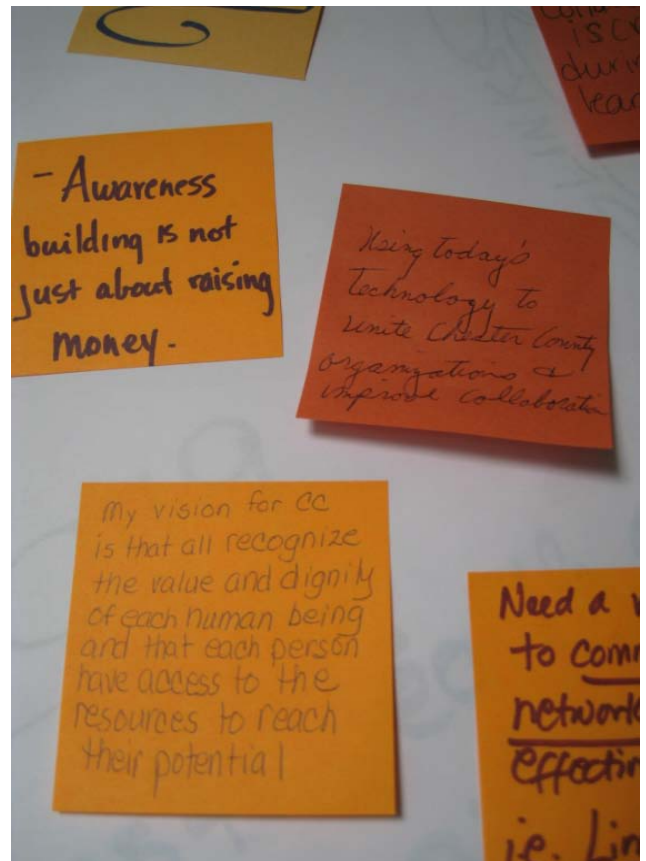
- Recruit and train volunteers
- Increase volunteer coordination

4. Raise Awareness of Local Issues

- Increase awareness of poverty and community needs
- Mobilize affluent and comfortable to engage in solutions
- Create awareness of safety issues
- Tell stories of real people
- Work with townships to achieve meaningful governance

5. Network

- Collect names and make contact with at least five people
- Schedule time every week to meet with new people



World Café Key Points

At the close of the session, participants were asked to write down one key point that they would take away from the Chester County World Café and post them on a wall for other people to see. Some key points:

- Broaden awareness: take at least one action
- Call at least five people I met today
- Engage in more inter-agency communication and collaboration
- Need a vehicle to communicate and network more effectively
- Commit to explore collaboration opportunity with complementary or competitive organization every month
- Be intent on dedicating time to reflect and be creative
- Have more diversity on Board; be sure Board is reflective of broader demographics of our community; reach out more to other organizations
- Communities need to become actual communities—people, businesses, organizations
- Take risks



AFTERNOON AT SUMMER CAMP

During the lunch hour, several organizations participated in group and individual consultations. Louis J. Beccaria, President and CEO of the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, led a group discussion about Board development; Samuel Harrell and Amelia Schertz of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition led a group discussion about fundraising. Individual consultations were provided by Jason D. Alexander, Capacity for Change, to the ACEER Foundation on strategic planning; by Eileen McVety, Spot-on Writing to the Coatesville Community Health Center on marketing and public relations; and by Eva L. Verplanck to the Chester County Dental Clinic on Board development. Mini-grants in the amount of \$250 each were awarded to the Kennett Symphony of Chester County and Phoenixville Area Community Services from the Capacity for Change Fund of the Chester County Community Foundation.

Following lunch, the afternoon consisted of two sets of workshops to allow participants to focus on building individual skills and the capacity of their organizations.



• **Workshop I:**

- *Organizational Management: Building Healthy Organizations* by Jason D. Alexander, Capacity for Change
- *Building the Board Your Organization Needs* by Sonia J. Stamm, The Stamm Consultancy

• **Workshop II:**

- *Defining Your Organization's Centers of Excellence* by Meghan McVety, Capacity for Change
- *Building Your Network* by Jason D. Alexander, Capacity for Change and Sonia J. Stamm, The Stamm Consultancy



NEXT STEPS

Based on the incredibly positive feedback, Capacity for Change is planning its Second Annual Chester County Summer Camp for 2010. Capacity for Change will share the Summer Camp experience with others to promote a conversation about how different sectors, organizations and individuals can work together to maintain and enhance the vibrancy of Chester County for nonprofits and for everyone.

“The Nonprofit Summer Camp gave us the opportunity to really reflect on our work, look outside of our own situation, and think about the bigger picture. We came away with new insight and gained perspective. It was a privilege to participate in such a great learning and relationship building experience.”
- 2009 Summer Camp Participant

“Thank you for a thought-provoking yet relaxing and healing day with opportunities to make connections and reflect. My favorite camp activities used to be canoeing and singing by the campfire. Now I will need to revise my list.”
- 2009 Summer Camp Participant

THANKS

We extend a special thanks to Karen Simmons, President and CEO of the Chester County Community Foundation, and Louis J. Beccaria, President and CEO of the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, for their support of the Summer Camp, which included ideas for the program, outreach to the nonprofit community, and their presence at the camp.

We are grateful to the following for their generosity of spirit, time and resources:

- Louis J. Beccaria and Lynn Hartman, Phoenixville Community Health Foundation
- Christine Campbell, DrumWolf Drum Circles
- Debbie Dundon, Phoenixville Area Resource Network
- Samuel Harrell and Amelia Schmertz, Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition
- Judy Lemezis, Temenos Retreat Center
- Eileen McVety, Spot-on Writing



- Karen Simmons, Chester County Community Foundation (and thanks to all staff and interns)
- Sonia J. Stamm, The Stamm Consultancy
- Eva L. Verplanck, Community Volunteer

We are grateful to all of the Summer Camp participants, who were willing to take a risk with their valuable time and join us for this inaugural event. Their enthusiasm, generosity, dedication and joy were a gift to all.

SUMMER CAMP PARTICIPANT LIST

Marguerite Gould and Ellen Spoeher

ACEER Foundation

Patricia Brown

Atglen Public Library

Cindy Jaros and Nick Everhart

Brandywine Valley Association

Zalene Corey

Camphill Soltane

Donald Price

Chester County Community Dental Center

Karen Simmons

Chester County Community Foundation

Terry Mullineaux

Chester County Intermediate Unit

Peggy Wadsworth

Chester County Library System

Joyce Chester, Jolanta Morys, Gina Venuti

Chester County OIC

Cyd McCord

Childhood Education Coalition of Chester County

Krystine Sipple

The Clinic

Kathryn Spurlock

Coatesville Center for Community Health

Barbara Fentress and Sarah Gifford

Daemion Counseling Center

Angela Scully

Darlington Arts Center

Maria McDonald

Elite Charitable Foundation

Teresa Lee Powell

Everything Education

Jeremiah Kauffman

Garage Community & Youth Center—West Grove

Nate Hoffer

Good Samaritan Shelter, Inc.

Jim Ford and Patti Wilcox

Good Works, Inc.

Adrienne Nash and Cheryl Miles

Housing to Self-Sufficiency

Lorri Sarosy

Interfaith Housing Assistance Corporation of Chester County



Ginna Goodall

Kennett Symphony of Chester County

Milena Lanz and Christine Mummert

Maternal and Child Health Consortium

Victor Jegede and Judy Reid

The Peacemaker Center

Carol Berger and Vera Coyne

Phoenixville Area Community Services

Lou Beccaria

Phoenixville Community Health Foundation

Catherine Friedman, Laura Guralnick and Linda Nguyen

Residential Living Options

Roxane Ferguson

Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce

Susan Kuebler and Jackie Mass

Tick Tock Early Learning Center

Linda Grosse

Volunteer English Program of Chester County

Dallas Matthews, Lydia Robb, Christina Valocchi
West Chester Area Communities that Care

Jeanne Anderson and Diane Matthews
West Chester Dance Works

Victoria Dow
West Chester Public Library

Mary Pat Knauss and Connie Rose
Wings for Success

Michele Daly
Women's Resource Center



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Capacity for Change, LLC
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CAPACITY FOR CHANGE
A PUBLIC INTEREST CONSULTING GROUP

Capacity for Change inspires greater community impacts through smart strategy consulting.

We position nonprofit organizations, government agencies, philanthropic institutions and private corporations to set and achieve ambitious goals through exceptional plans, improved management capacities, enhanced governance, effective marketing, and a deep understanding of the organization's impact and potential for the future. Capacity for Change nourishes public and private institutions that are the heart of vibrant, engaged and healthy communities.

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