

Healthy Neighborhoods Learning Collaborative Meeting

November 2016

Healthy Neighborhoods partners and invited guests engaged in a variety of learning and networking opportunities during the two-day convening held in Syracuse. On November 17, participants explored the Near Westside neighborhood in a walking tour and experienced peacemaking as a restorative justice practice. On November 18, Healthy Neighborhoods partners learned skills for working with diverse stakeholders to address community safety, gained insights and lessons for assisting communities in turmoil due to violence, and brainstormed with experts in community safety and evaluation in strategy sessions. Convening participants included partners from the nine Healthy Neighborhoods sites, the [New York State Health Foundation](#) (NYSHealth), the [New York Community Trust](#) (NYCT), Active Living By Design (ALBD), the NYU Evaluation Team, and other partner organizations.

[Participant contact list](#)

Slides and resources from the meeting sessions are hyperlinked within the agenda below.

Thursday, November 17 | Syracuse Neighborhood | 2:00–7:30 PM

Near Westside Story: A Walking Tour

The walking tour featured a firsthand experience of how comprehensive and strategic efforts are transforming the Near Westside into a healthier, safer, and thriving neighborhood. Participants engaged in interactive opportunities to learn about healthy eating and active spaces strategies with stops at Nojaim Supermarket, Skiddy Park, and Movement on Main Pocket Park. The tour highlighted collaborative efforts with the Peacemaking Center and Project, which recruits and trains local volunteers to act as Peacemakers around community issues; ProLiteracy, which is an international organization that promotes adult literacy; and other meaningful partnerships and sites in the community.

- [Tour Guide](#)
- [Tour Schedule](#)

Peacemaking Circle Session

This interactive session introduced participants to the concept of peacemaking as a restorative justice practice and engaged them in a peacemaking circle. Participants learned about the Native American history of peacemaking and the peacemaking techniques of storytelling and listening.

Dinner and Conversations

While enjoying a healthy meal, convening participants shared reflections and insights from the visit in the Near Westside neighborhood and engaged in informal conversations and networking with partners from fellow Healthy Neighborhood sites, NYSHealth, NYCT, ALBD, the NYU Evaluation Team, and other invited guests.

Friday, November 18

The Central New York Philanthropy Center, Syracuse | 7:30 AM–4:00 PM

Speaker biosketches

Welcome, Reflections on Day 1, and Overview of Day 2

Rebecca Bostwick, Program Director, Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion, Syracuse University
Bronwyn Starr, Program Officer, New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth)
Irfan Hasan, Program Director, New York Community Trust (NYCT)

Panel Discussions: Making Syracuse Safe through Multiple Partnerships and Approaches

Roberto Martinez, Program Coordinator, Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion, Syracuse University
Maarten Jacobs, Executive Director, Near Westside Initiative
Joe Cecile, Deputy Chief of Police, Syracuse City Police Department
Lisa Vavonese, Peacemaking Coordinator, Peacemaking Center @ The Center for Court Innovation
Tairina Martinez, Summer at Skiddy Youth Employee and Near Westside Initiative Board Member

Through a multi-pronged approach, the Syracuse Healthy Neighborhood team is working with diverse stakeholders to address community safety. Panelists discussed the framework of the Take Back the Streets campaign and how activating and re-designing public space, empowering community members as peacemakers, and employing neighborhood youth all contribute to a healthier, safer neighborhood. Participants also engaged with the panelists in discussions around related community safety topics.

Community Safety as an Integral Component of Healthy Community Change

Jason Cooper, Senior Program Officer, LISC Safety
Miguel Melendez, Special Projects Director, Ibero-American Development Corporation (IADC)

This session provided perspectives from and exchange with experienced practitioners who address community safety every day. Sharing insights and lessons from his recent experiences assisting cities in turmoil due to violence, Jason Cooper addressed effective strategies for improving relations with law enforcement, examining diverse crime drivers, and deploying the resources of community/economic development and social services to help solve problems in ways that create healthy communities for children and families. Miguel Melendez helped lead residents in Rochester, NY through a collaborative process to capitalize on community assets and reactivate public spaces in

a neighborhood challenged by open-air drug sales. During this session, Miguel shared the story of the Project HOPE neighborhood and how grassroots organizing efforts have led to residents taking on safety challenges in the City of Rochester.

Lunch and Conversations

Participants shared a healthy meal and continued to engage in informal networking and collaborative learning.

Panel Discussions: #BrownsvilleStrongerTogether—Tackling Safety from Placemaking to Systems Change

*James Brodick, Director of Brooklyn Community Justice Centers, Center for Court Innovation
Duane Kinnon, Kinnon Group and Chair, Friends of Betsy Head Park
Layman Lee, Placemaking Manager, Brownsville Partnership/Community Solutions*

Brownsville is a neighborhood in Brooklyn that has long suffered from the narrative of poor health, poverty, and violence. During this session, participants learned another side of Brownsville's story in which community leaders, cross-sector partners and agencies work creatively and collectively with residents to make the neighborhood a safer and healthier place to live. Participants engaged in conversations about Brownsville's approaches to place-making, park rejuvenation, and reengineering the justice system to work for young people on a neighborhood scale.

Strategy Sessions

*Jason Cooper, Program Officer, LISC Safety
Miguel Melendez, Special Projects Director, Ibero-American Development Corporation (IADC)
James Brodick, Director of Brooklyn Community Justice Centers, Center for Court Innovation
Paul Tainsh, Senior Evaluator, and Carolyn Berry, Co-Investigator; NYU School of Medicine*

Building from the previous sessions, participants received additional opportunities to learn and deepen their work through brainstorming and learning with experts in community safety. Healthy Neighborhoods partners also engaged with the NYU Evaluation Team and with each other. These small and focused discussion groups enabled partners from the Healthy Neighborhoods sites to actively engage and contribute by asking questions, sharing ideas and resources.

Reflections and Input from Sites

NYSHealth, NYCT, and ALBD Staff

This interactive session allowed the Healthy Neighborhoods partners to share their reflections from the meeting, and identify exciting and promising actions to take in their communities.