



Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Community-Campus Partnership Update: Caswell County

By CED Guest Author

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Since 2009, UNC has been supporting leaders in Caswell County on a variety of community and economic development projects. Through that work, public school teachers have emerged as a possible talent pool for future civic leadership. On Wednesday, Dec 14th, CCP and our partners at the Danville Regional Foundation (DRF) co-sponsored a leadership workshop for teachers and other community leaders in Caswell County. The purpose of the meeting was threefold: (1) to describe University resources available to support leaders in Caswell County, (2) to describe the DRF "Make It Happen" grant program, which provides up to \$10,000 small grants to small, visible, community-based projects and (3) to begin developing collaborative projects that might qualify for DRF funding through "Make It Happen," and generate new momentum around community priorities. The following is a summary of the issues and projects that emerged from conversation between the University, a regional foundation, and community leaders from Caswell County.

- Need for a facility where children in alternative school could be made to feel a part of the community, perhaps with tutors and role model volunteers.
- After-school and weekend programming, tutoring, remedial education and mentoring for children that are falling behind.
- Saturday academy specifically for middle school remediation prior to high school.
- Assessment of the highest and best use for the Dillard School Building, perhaps as a multi-use training and community center.
- Caregivers college to train home-based caregivers on methods, procedures, etc related to caring for disabled family members.
- Arts and reading program for younger children (ages 3-4) that provides books to children, which are followed up with dramatic arts programming.
- Community engagement programming, including movies in the park, high-profile musical acts for First Friday events to draw larger crowds, wireless internet in the Maud Gatewood Park.

Brainstorming led to two discrete working groups committed to tackling the following: (1) after school and weekend programming for children including tutoring, mentoring and exposure to jobs and higher education for children, and (2) community based programming including movies, music and other events to increase civic pride and engagement.



*Will Lambe authored the NC Rural Center report, *Small Towns, Big Ideas*, and he served as Director of the Community and Economic Development Program at the School of Government from 2009 to 2014.*