



# Clarkston Development Foundation

**165** people  
**6** themes  
**14** small groups  
**120** minutes  
**1** community  
Clarkston Community Conversation

## **Summary Report August 2, 2012**

On August 2, 2012, the Clarkston Development Foundation hosted its third Community Conversation. The evening included a sharing of progress made since the last community conversation and what has been accomplished by community residents and organizations working together. This report reflects the comments and opinions of the attendees as documented at the Clarkston Community Conversation.

The conversation focused on three primary questions:

1. What are thoughts about what has happened since the last meeting?
2. What next steps should be taken?
3. Who else should be at the table or working on this?

Over 165 people attended and divided into groups based on their interests. Fourteen groups met and the topics with the greatest number of groups were Healthy, Safety, and Learning.

The topics and the number of corresponding groups:

- The Healthy Community (4 groups)
- The Safe Community (3 groups)
- The Learning Community (3 groups)
- The Connected Community: Community Building and Family Advocacy (2 groups)
- The Playing and Fit Community (1 group)
- The Well-Fed and Ecologically Sustainable Community (1 group)

### **Ideas and Suggestions from the Community Conversation**

Several participants talked emphasized the need for action and evaluating progress. Participants also commented on the importance of communicating when work groups are meeting and about the status of community projects.

1. Make sure that we are making progress
2. Set some particular results that we want to accomplish by the next meeting
3. Set up or convene committees or strategy groups

## **The Healthy Community**

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*We want a healthy community that has a beautiful healthcare facility with resident professionals. We want preventive health through health fairs, healthy eating, and active living with races, walking, and playgrounds.*

### **What are thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?**

A primary ongoing health issue concerns access to medical care, particularly for chronic diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure. Access includes not only the availability of treatment, but also the transportation to get to the treatment. Often there is no continuity of medical care.

Along with access there are comprehension issues, which relate to quality language skills and access to translators necessary to explain medical conditions and to understand the remedies. We are concerned also with medical staffs' lack of respect in treating patients.

We desire to have health promoters in the community who create a variety of communications from newsletters, social media, and other direct communication in community meetings and language groups.

### **What next steps should be taken?**

- Focus on transportation that allows people reasonable access to medical care, including transportation to the larger institutions like Grady Hospital
- Focus on the language gaps that still make communication about medical issues difficult
- Focus on mental health care as well as physical care
- Create a specific clinic that serves the diverse community of Clarkston.
  - See Nellie Piallo of Medshare
  - Reach a level of 80% of those who are uninsured
  - Require group of people to create clinics
  - Provide transportation to and from the clinic
  - Ensure the ability to communicate
- Create a health fair
  - Provide mental health screenings
  - Provide dental screenings (tooth brushes fair)
  - Include area medical and dental providers in the conversation:
    - Doctors Garcia, Lakendra, and McCollum
    - Whiteford Clinics
    - Best Care Dental
    - Greater Atlanta Health Centers – Dr. Joyce Lewis
    - Family Practice of Atlanta – Dr. Waters diabetes
    - Mental health services

**Who else should be at the table or working on this?**

- Better network (not just professional to professional)
- Established network at Emory
- DeKalb Board of Health
- Dr. Connet
- Birendra Dhakal
- Community interpreters
- Damber Timsina
- Chandra Sharma – Refuge Health Clinic, DeKalb Medical
- DJ/BMRai – Community leaders
- Sarman Samel / Gopal Samel
- Pabrita Rizal – Leaders who understand us and healthcare system
- Bahadur Subbat
- Work with clergy and faith leaders

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## The Safe Community

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*We want to create a community that has safe places and safe passages to get to those places. We also want communities organized to stand against crime and we want supportive and accountable relationships with our police officers in Clarkston and in DeKalb County.*

### What are thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?

We have come to this group because of fear and the lack of personal safety. It is important to be working together if we are to be safe and to feel safe. Working together and with the police is necessary. New partnerships are important.

Some of us are fearful and perceive increased crime that involves young people.

### What next steps should be taken?

Several themes emerged:

- Create ways for residents to act on their own and to use their own power (one example: start a student alliance against bullying)
- Create parental partnerships
- Increase education about culture, laws, and policies
- Get increased involvement from the bicycle path organization
- Seek greater security at apartments, including increased police presence

### Who else is working on this issue?

We have the benefit of after school programs at the Clarkston Community Center.

### Who else should be at the table or working on this?

- School System
- Police (Clarkston + DeKalb)
- Healthcare Profession
- Neighborhood Watch
- Juvenile Court
- Drug Court
- Sheriff's Office
- Gang Unit
- Apartment Managers
- Business Owners
- Public Officials
- Youth
- Churches & Religious Leaders
- Safety Organizations – Firefighter
- Chief Hudson
- Mayor Manuel Ransom
- Keith Barker (City Manager)
- Officer Brown
- Detective Davis
- Officer Payton (Tucker)
- Officer Riddling (Tucker)
- Officer Sharon (Tucker)
- Asst. Chief Dale
- Sheriff Brown
- All Judges (Adams, Pegler)
- Probation Officer
- Patti Keigler (educator Fire Department)
- Ms. Jones
- Principals of Clarkston Schools
- Ms. Richardson (Parent Resource – Jolly)
- Sharon Barnes-Sutton (Commissioner District 4)
- Hank Johnson
- Simone Joy
- State Rep Karla Drenner
- State Rep Steve Bradshaw
- Dorothy White Williams
- Decatur Pediatric
- Betty Hassan
- Dr. Yan
- Dr. Vanessa (Dentist)
- Community Representatives

## **The Learning Community**

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*We want to improve our schools and ensure that there is a range of educational opportunities that engage our youth and that put young people in leadership roles.*

### **What are thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?**

Education and learning is everything for our community and families. It is necessary and we can and need to improve it. It should be our top priority.

Learning the English language is needed to improve lives. We can increase the learning of English through:

- Adapting successful techniques and methods from other schools and other school districts
- We can learn from other residents and family members

Our children are our greatest assets for learning. They learn to speak and can benefit from helping others. Others who need this kind of access are the families from Congo and Liberia.

### **What other assets do we have for educating children and families?**

- We have after school programs like RFS and IRC
- Recreational and summer camping programs are provided by Soccer in the Streets, Clarkston Football (and other sports), volunteers who work with the Global Village Project, and other groups
- We have family engagement, Mommy and Me and the International Study Center
- We have translators
- We can increase these assets through raising money, building new partnerships, and International Festival

### **What next steps should be taken?**

- Hold monthly CCC meetings and strategy sessions
- Make progress on the International Festival
- Link up to R.O.A. (Refugee Organizing in Action)
- Increase access to technology links by creating a Clarkston Wi-Fi network
- Create Neighborhood Awareness groups, which might work like neighborhood watch groups
- Use the power of the voices of children
- Create a diverse and representative group of local residents to communicate with the schools
- Secure additional English teachers and classes
- Provide English books
- Engage residents from the Congo and Liberia through local contacts

### **Who else is working on this issue?**

- R.F.S. – Afterschool Programs, Family Engagement,
  - translating for school help (McClendon Elementary)
  - Summer Camp
- Soccer in the Streets / Clarkston Football Club
  - School Mentors, 6-12 Grade
- Global Village Project – Tutoring, teaching for HS & GED Prep
- ICS – school within the school, individualized tutoring, K-5
- Mommy & Me Family Literacy
- Adult Education
- Advocates on behalf of children – Dealing w/ bullying

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- Clarkston Youth Initiative
- IRC – afterschool programs / summer program / internships
- International Student Center
- Summer Camp Teacher from Global Village

### Who else should be at the table or working on this?

- Selestine
- Yosepine
- Basuni
- Cooper
- Head of Georgia Piedmont
- More Kids
- Partnership for Community Action
- More Citizens
- Daycare workers
- School Readiness
- Faith Based Organizations
- Police / Law Enforcement
- Bullies
- Local Politicians / Mayor
- DeKalb Workforce Development
- School Administration
- Parents
- Teachers

## **The Connected Community: Community Building and Family Advocacy**

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*We want to be the model of a peaceful community that sees its diverse cultures, gifts, and abilities as the building blocks for further development.*

### **What are our thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?**

We celebrate our diversity and the many cultures that make up our community. While groups support each other and stay together, we also want to find unity in our uniqueness.

We have been missing connections and need to be more involved with our neighbors.

### **What next steps should be taken?**

- Create specific goals and committees to work on education, employment, and youth.
- Building community calls for additional opportunities to be together. Monthly potlucks are one example. There are other ways to network.
- Update the directory of resources to that it is more useful and consider holding a Resource Workshop or Fair so that people can better understand what is available.
- Take steps to increase the number of multilingual staff members in government and in the schools. Recruit diverse, multilingual volunteers to help with translation.

### **Who else is working on this issue?**

- Clarkston Health Collaborative
- Clarkston Business Association
- Active Living Initiative
- DeKalb Sustainable Neighborhood
- Global Growers and other farmer groups
  - Clarkston Farmers Market
- Youth Spirit Initiative group
- Fugees Soccer Group
- Service Organization e.g. RFS, Refugee Sewing group, IRC
- Bobby King's Potluck
- McKenzie's work at Clarkston Community Center
- GA Piedmont College reaching out to community
- GA Perimeter College's community involvement
- Our Common Place (keeps community informed)
- Library expanding services in spite of funds
- Health care providers, WIC people, elders,
- Stakeholders, employers, local experts
- Social programs, religious figures, housing experts
- Youth, Department of Juvenile Justice, police
- Apartment managers, school leaders, elected officials
- Homeland security (passports needed), community leaders
- Somali-American Community Center
- Community radio

**Who else should be at the table or working on this?**

- All cultures, nationalities, every group in Clarkston
- City Council & other government representatives
- Local Businesses and Schools/Colleges
- Georgia Perimeter College
- Police Department
- Apartment complex managements, Neighborhood Associations
- Churches, Mosques, Temples, all religion
- Apartment owners
- Youths, teenagers



## **The Playing and Fit Community**

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*We want a community that has increased places for individuals and groups to exercise and to play. We want to find the right mix of facilities in neighborhoods and apartment complexes and facilities in public areas.*

### **What are thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?**

We currently have some significant resources for play and fitness. We have walking and biking and a strong active living program. The farmers market is a source of fresh produce.

It is important for us to better connect the apartments to the city for increased cleanups, safety, and recreation. We need a recreation center for the City of Clarkston.

Increasing the places for recreation is important to us. An example is a new soccer field at Indian Creek Elementary. A new pool and playground equipment are a part of Milam Park.

We have community gardens and the next steps are additional vegetable gardens and fruit trees at Indian Creek Elementary along with outdoor classrooms.

### **What next steps should be taken?**

- Complete the community garden at Friendship Forest
- Increase the ability to move safely and to walk and exercise: more sidewalks, a pedestrian bridge at I-285, and improved trail connectivity are important
- Engage apartment managers about recreation in apartment complexes
- Increase the amount of public space, particularly for recreation
- Identify additional resources and increase community involvement to create additional options for recreation and fitness

### **Who else is working on this issue?**

- YMCA (Wade Walker Executive Director)
- Clarkston First Baptist Church (Christin Taylor)
- City of Clarkston (Jason Gaines)
- Clarkston International
- Indian Creek Elementary (Dr. Campbell)
- Clarkston Active Living Initiative (Susan Rawlings)
- Clarkston Community Center
- McKenzie Wren, Clarkston Community Center
- CFBC Community Development Center
- Howard Evans
- Clarkston Development Foundation
- Jeremy Lewis
- CDC (Sandy Long can Provide Recommendation)
- DeKalb Board Of Health (Dr. Leslie Richmond & Mary Bazeile)
- Residents

**Who else should be at the table or working on this?**

- Youth
- Apartment Management
- Businesses (Clarkston Business Association)
- Schools
- YMCA (Executive Director)
- Government (State & Federal)
- Susan
- Faith-Based Organizations

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## **The Well-Fed and Ecologically Sustainable Community**

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*We want a community where we have food markets with healthy choices and where we have access to community gardens and green corridors and open spaces.*

### **What are thoughts and experiences since the last meeting?**

We are aware that increased green spaces and gardening will expand the availability of produce to supplement what people eat. Growing and selling locally will use the gifts of many of our residents. These activities bring people together and create outlets for student engagement.

### **What next steps should be taken?**

- Community gardens increase a sense of community as people work together
- Create partnerships with local universities
- Locally grown food has many benefits
- Educate residents about local and healthy food
- Create a cookbook to sell for preparing found food
- Take advantage of Sagal Radio to get the word out
- Engage clergy to talk about spirituality, health, and the blessings of local food
- Explore opportunities to get locally grown food into school
- Hold a healthy eating month

### **Who else should be at the table or working on this?**

- Homeless agencies
- Global Growers – Susan Pavlin
- Health Department – Brandi Whitney
- CCC Food Security Initiative
- GGN, East Atlanta Market
- Atlanta Community Food Bank – Fred Conrad
- Georgia Organics – policy
- Cooperative Extension & Master gardeners (extension agents)
- Park Pride – green spaces
- Apartment complex managers – some are; some aren't; all should
- People with plots of land – CCC, 40 Oaks
- Schools – Andrew Ross (ICE)
- Land, education, healthy food
- Churches – Angela Moore (CFBC)
- GPC – Tyrie Smith
- Karla Drenner
- Kathie Gannon, Sharon Barnes Sutton
- Birendra Dhakal (Bhutanese Association)
- Clarkston City Planner (Jason Gaines)
- City Manager (Keith Barker)
- Food pantries
- Emory – Julie Schaeffer
- Alfi (Atlanta Local Food Initiative)
- DFCS – food stamps
- Media – Creative Loafing, SAGAL Radio, CNN, Crossroads, Champion
- Refugees, ethnic organizations
- Individual longtime community members (retirees)



# Clarkston Development Foundation

## **Appendix #1.**

Conversation sheets used in the August 2, 2012, Clarkston Community Conversation

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### **The Healthy Community**

*We want a healthy community that has a beautiful health care facility with resident professionals. We want preventive health through health fairs, healthy eating and active living with races, walking, and playgrounds.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Focus on better-coordinated and more accessible health care
- Create better sources of healthy food
- Ensure places for exercise

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- How can we leverage the interaction of health professionals and institutions in the community?
- What would increase accessibility to treatments and to preventive health opportunities?
- What changes in the systems would make a difference?
- What organizing among different stakeholder groups would make a difference?
- What can we learn from Kaiser-Permanente and other providers and their work in other communities, for example Kaiser in the Belvedere Community?

### **The Safe Community**

*We want to create a community that has safe places and safe passages to get to those places. We also want communities organized to stand against crime and we want supportive and accountable relationships with our police officers in Clarkston and in DeKalb County.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Work to prevent bullying
- Take steps to maximize police presence
- Provide avenues of communication between police and community

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- How can we foster greater connections among neighbors, city officials, and police departments to increase awareness and security?
- What are the ways that we can connect homeowners and of the stakeholder groups to join in common cause around security?
- What can we do to increase security in the apartment communities?

### **The Connected Community: Community Building and Family Advocacy**

*We want to be the model of a peaceful community that sees its diverse cultures, gifts, and abilities as the building blocks for further development.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Honor our diversity
- Find ways to strengthen connections for individuals and families

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- How do we create public places for the community to meet and develop relationships and plans?
- What events could help bring us together across cultures?
- Who are the key stakeholder groups that are on the sideline and how do we engage them?
- What are the practical ways in which we can connect individuals and families with the services they need?

### **The Learning Community**

*We want to improve our schools and we also want to make sure that there is a range of educational opportunities that engage our youth and that put young people in leadership roles.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Create opportunities for young people who would be otherwise un-challenged.
- Create opportunities for young leaders to be ambassadors with influence.
- Public schools will need to be partners in our efforts to improve educational opportunities.

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- How can we encourage more youth activities that also lend themselves to leadership development and education?
- How can we have the maximum leverage with the DeKalb County School System?
- Who are our allies with relationships?
- Do we invest in programs in the community?
- Do we invest in convening and advocacy?

### **The Playing and Fit Community**

*We want a community that has increased places for individuals and groups to exercise and to play. We want to find the right mix of facilities in neighborhoods and apartment complexes and facilities in public areas.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Provide safe places for recreation that is community friendly.
- Provide opportunities for individuals and for groups and leagues.
- Find outdoor performance space for entertainment.

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- What is the thread that connects green spaces, passive recreational spaces, and active recreational spaces?
- Are there resources currently available that people do not use or of which many people are not aware?
- What are the recreational issues in the apartment communities? Are there possible creative improvements there?

### **The Well-Fed and Ecologically Sustainable Community**

*We want a community where we have food markets with healthy choices and where we have access to community gardens and green corridors and open spaces.*

#### Principles that Shape the Vision

- Increase the number of markets whether in buildings or open-air
- Encourage new alternatives for local food production

#### Important Questions Raised in Prior Conversations

- What is the best way to build additional support for urban agriculture?
- How can garden venues be increased?
- What steps would increase the sustainability of the gardens in the community?

