

The Thriving Cities Project
Milwaukee Profile
David Flowers
June 2014

First –

A thank-you to all the dialogue participants. Your thoughts and words made all the difference.

Many thanks to the Community Transformation Project Stewardship Team, The Body and Soul Healing Arts Center, and the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion for all the encouragement and support.

A big thanks to Dr. Katherine Wilson for your initiative, good thinking, editorial contributions and so much more.

“It is the nightmare of scarcity that produces anxiety, that issues in a policy of accumulation, that eventuates in a monopoly, that finally practices violence in order to sustain itself...The question that is in front of you in this project is how to make this journey from scarcity and anxiety, accumulation, monopoly and violence, where we are all imbedded, into this other way of being in the world. Which is an arena of unexpected gifts of neighborly abundance.”

-Walter Brueggemann

Foreword

The past eight months have been a unique journey. There have been many conversations over the course of these days usually starting with “I’m writing a profile about what’s thriving in Milwaukee.” People’s reactions have been surprisingly consistent. Yes, there have been some cynical jibes. But, in almost every case, I’ve had a pleasant surprise as men or women of all ages would move their chair a little closer, or lean in with sincere interest. I’d frame the conversation with a quick reference to Milwaukee as a connected “human ecosystem.” People seemed to get the notion pretty fast. They wanted to hear about and talk about being connected. Their eyes would light up as they talked about their understanding and experiences of thriving. We didn’t talk much about the news.

This paper is about what’s thriving in Milwaukee. There are many publications and surveys, news reports and studies that talk about what isn’t thriving. This paper won’t do that.

Like many American cities, Milwaukee has many problems. But where does one start that conversation? Our shared problems are so interwoven that to address one or two wouldn't scratch the surface. The challenge inherent in any discussion of our city's problems brings me to the topic of scarcity.

I remember years ago as an undergraduate student, at the first session of my Intro to Economics class, the professor said something like, "All modern economic theory is predicated on the theory of scarce resources." I raised my hand and asked, "So, if I assume there are never enough resources, I'll do well in this class?" He replied, "Yes!" and smiled. I found it interesting that the notion of scarce resources is an economic theory. Scarcity has become a foundational, accepted story for this society. Scarcity economics form the bedrock for the way institutions view and operate in the world. There is never enough profit. There is never enough to "go around." Formal leadership speaks the language of scarcity because that is how organizations get funded. Public servants use the language of scarcity to build electorates. Vote for me – I'll get you what you're missing.

But this paper is not about where people experience scarcity. It's about where they experience thriving. As I have been talking with people the last eight months about what it means to thrive, I have been hearing about good lives. In my conversations, people seemed to find it refreshing to talk about what's going well and what that looks like to them. We talked about the kinds of things not measured or reported in the news.

In preparation for this profile, some public dialogues were conducted on the topic of thriving. The participants were a diverse group, around a hundred people – black, white, brown, tan, elders, youth, unemployed people, professionals, community organizers, preachers, business

people. Participants were asked to think about Milwaukee as a connected ecosystem. They listened to one another describe places and events in their daily lives where they experienced thriving. It was transformative for many. No one referred to a balance sheet. Not many statistics were mentioned.

It's been eight months of listening to Milwaukee people talk about what's thriving in their lives. It's been a unique journey to a place I could never go to alone and with blessings I never before could have imagined.

A Milwaukee Profile for The Thriving Cities Project

Introduction

Milwaukee is a city of evolving norms, laws, habits, practices, products, rituals, associations, and institutions. Its culture guides and informs the individual and collective lives of its citizens in very particular ways. A city represents multiple and differing individual understandings of community, what a city is, and what it means to be a citizen; when all are viewed together, these shared understandings powerfully shape its culturally unique human ecology. Milwaukee is created and constantly re-created by the sum of the everyday decisions and interactions of its citizens, and by the meanings they associate with those decisions and interactions.

Cities do not behave like mechanical systems. The issues of a city and its individuals are interdependent and cannot be separated from one another. A city is a vast set of complex decisions, relationships and inter-related points-of-view that constantly change and evolve. Because a city is a complex and asymmetric set of human interactions, it is possible to also

consider it as a dynamic, constantly changing human ecology that both supports and defines the limits of how its people live or thrive together, much like how the study of a specific ecology reveals environmental factors that define and constrain how life shows up within its boundaries.

To talk of a thriving city ecology is to describe a condition well beyond functional survival. Thriving is purposeful. Thriving implies conditions for positive development are in place. Historically, the concept can be linked with the Greek notion of *eudemonia*, the idea of human flourishing and fulfillment attained in a context of practiced and virtuous effort. Pragmatically, in this day and age, thriving is often associated with learning, health, purpose, resourcefulness, adaptability and positive outcomes.

This profile will provide a narrative about how and where thriving is experienced in Milwaukee's interconnected and evolving human ecology. The narrative will describe factors that contribute to thriving and provide examples of what thriving looks like in Milwaukee today.

Six Endowments

Viewing a city as a set of six “endowments” provides a method for investigating a city’s ecology from differing yet inter-related perspectives. By endowment we mean a particular and recognizable cultural dimension of communal life.

Each of the endowments describes a particular set of dynamic capacities or qualities within Milwaukee's human ecology. Three of the six endowments, “the True,” “the Good,” and “the Beautiful,” build on classical ideals. Three additional endowments represent more modern ideals of “the Prosperous,” “the Just and Well-ordered,” and “the Sustainable.” Always inter-

matter” when thriving showed up or played out within their experience. Question three asked participants about complexities – the grey areas or other considerations that appear to support or hinder thriving within the particular endowment. A facilitator posed each question, allowed the group to think a few minutes and then respond, in turn, without interruption for about two minutes. After the three rounds of questions, participants were encouraged to have a respectful and connected conversation asking about what they’d heard from one another regarding that evening’s topic. At the end of each evening, the small groups re-convened to the larger group and shared a brief reflection on their group discussion. Participants reported often on the unique experiences of sharing about what’s thriving (in contrast to what’s going wrong) and people listening to one another without debate.

Facilitators captured over 1500 comments/data points over the six consecutive Wednesday evenings. One interesting aspect of the data is a general absence of reference to large institutions often associated with the endowments. This might be attributed in part to the short introductions that defined thriving at the beginning of each evening. This re-focusing drew people to discuss abundance and thriving rather than scarcity. Discussions tended to center on people’s personal experience of the particular endowment. As an example, in the discussion on Milwaukee’s endowment of The True, the realm of knowledge, there was sparse reference to School Districts, Public or Charter Schools etc. in the group notes – much of the conversation was on the many forms education takes in building community, or supporting families. Similarly, the group that discussed the Prosperous, the realm of economic life, didn’t spend much time on large institutions, companies, job programs or economic initiatives often seen in the popular

press. Instead, topics like small business support, neighborhood business initiatives, networks, transportation and personal values dominated that discussion.

The data gathered from the public dialogues was examined over a number of weeks. A coding process was used to identify recurring threads and themes.

Discussion Themes

The following themes emerged from the data collected during the discussions:

- **Thriving Story**

Hopeful, positive yet pragmatic narratives about thriving and flourishing.

Dialogue participants described organizations, people, events, groups and places that represent positive, value-based stories describing a better future. These stories portray qualities that include vision, passion, relationship building, commitment and caring as well as strategic thinking, creativity or innovation.

- **People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness.**

Events and gathering places that naturally draw together people and allow for positive experiences.

Dialogue participants listed neighborhood centers, programs, regular events and activities that served to connect people while involving them in healthy, positive experiences.

- **Communication between Formal or Informal Groups.**

Shared positive outcomes between varied or diverse communities. Non-competitive relationship building.

Dialogue participants described positive outcomes and new creativity when previously disparate individuals or groups communicate and share resources or skills. Previously unknown synergies are made possible when trusting collaborations are formed.

- **Practical Tools, Systems Access, and Training.**

Timely access to practical systems, tools, or services that support individual or community thriving. Trainings. Resources.

Participants described how knowledge of and access to the right technology, method, teachers or service resources can be critical, timely factors that support the growth of a thriving environment.

- **Affinity Groups / People in Service.**

People in formal or informal organizations working on projects or causes that represent a shared interest or concern.

Dialogue groups spoke often of formal and informal groups that meet regularly around shared interests. Artists, hobbyists, study groups, neighbors, and organizations with a particular social concern were all examples. Thriving was seen where people of shared interest and values bring themselves, their time and resources together with others to create positive outcomes.

- **Demonstration Models /Sustained Systems.**

Organized demonstrations of a comprehensive vision with activities that support learning, health, purpose, resourcefulness, adaptability and positive outcomes.

Participants pointed to organizations and projects that use multiple approaches, activities and programs that lead to hopeful and thriving qualities in the city and its communities. Such organizations demonstrate a clear mission, strategic plan, multiple partnerships, visible projects and activities, and a purposeful story that brings people together.

Participants mentioned many organizations throughout the dialogues on thriving. The thirty-six highlighted in the following chart are meant to provide one example of thriving within a specific endowment and theme.

	Thriving Story	People Involvement Places and Eventfulness	Communication between Formal and Informal Groups	Practical tools, System access, Training	Affinity Groups People in Service	Demonstration Models Sustained Systems
The Beautiful	Bridges And Festivals	Parks and Neighborhoods	Artists in Community	Peck MIAD	Playback Theater Riverwest 24	First Stage
The Good	Greater Milwaukee Foundation	St Michaels Journey House	All Peoples Church	Yoga. Zeidler Center for Public Discussion	Interfaith Earth network	Women's Fund Cultures of Giving
The Just And Well Ordered	MICAH	ACLU Youth Social Justice Programs	Restorative Justice	Safe and Sound	Martin Drive Neighborhood Association	LISC Milwaukee
The Prosperous	The Valley	NWML Tower	Avenues West	Manufacturing Transportation	WWBIC	The Water Council
The True	St Anthony	Dominican Center for Women	Milwaukee Succeeds	Engineering UWM, MSOE, Marquette	Public Allies Urban Underground	Urban Ecology Center
The Sustainable	Victory Garden Initiative	Riverwest Co-ops	Milwaukee Environmental Consortium	Alice's Garden	Kinnickinnic reclamation	Growing Power

The Beautiful

The Realm of Aesthetics

Art and architecture, cultural centers and artistic traditions.

Thriving Story: A City of Bridges and Festivals.

Milwaukee's endowment of the Beautiful is played out daily in its neighborhoods, its lakefront, waterways and parks, and through its schools and community organizations across the city. Milwaukee's downtown performance and convention district provides multiple world-class theaters, opera, ballet, athletic and performance venues. The iconic baseball stadium, Miller Park with its retractable roof dominates the west end of the Menomonee valley just 5 minutes from downtown.

A Great Lakes port on the shores of Lake Michigan, the city sits on an estuary system at the confluence of the Kinnickinnic, Milwaukee, and Menomonee Rivers. Its geography, influenced by rivers, valleys, and bridges, shapes how Milwaukee citizens think, design, and have worked to develop the landscape. As early as 1840, when bridge placement was a major issue for early settlers, the design, placement and experience of footbridges, rail bridges, and viaducts has helped form Milwaukee's shared experience of the Beautiful.

Milwaukee has also come to be known as The City of Festivals with a long history of (often ethnic) neighborhood, Parish, or Church celebrations. After the repeal of Prohibition, citywide gatherings became common with riverside Volkfests and Midsummer festivals on the Lakefront. By the early 1970's, the 11-day Summerfest at Maier Festival Park on the lakefront featured local and national music acts with local restaurants pitching in serving up to 100,000 customers daily. Milwaukee's City of Festivals reputation truly took form in 1978 when a group

of Italian leaders hosted the first Festa Italiana that has led to a series of large ethnic-based gatherings including PolishFest, GermanFest, IrishFest, Arab World Fest, Mexican Fiesta, African World Fest, and Indian Summer. Scores of church and community festivals are also held, particularly in summer months, bringing neighbors and families out of their homes to share food, music and beautiful summer days in Milwaukee neighborhoods.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Examples: Parks and Neighborhoods

Participants listed multiple locations and neighborhoods that are enhanced by the beautiful architecture, sturdy housing and shared public spaces that are part of the cities legacy. The Fondy Farmers Market, recently re-designed by students from Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design is representative of the cities many Public Markets that were often listed as thriving community destinations. They described how the Marsupial Bridge and Media garden, spanning the Milwaukee River close to downtown, hosts summer evening film festivals and informal gatherings in ways reminiscent of a town square or village green. Thriving was seen in the art and architecture of neighborhood business districts – Brady Street, Kinnickinnic in Bay View, Center Street and Burleigh in Riverwest. A corner on Lisbon Boulevard, where a small Bakery and Art Gallery have set up shop; all were represented as the way neighborhoods stake a claim for beauty and community. The East side was described as an urban Shangri-La, a bike-friendly place, where design and architecture have come together in a way that supports a thriving experience of neighborhood life.

Architecturally, the German and Polish immigrant groups of the early twentieth century established a tradition of sturdy well-constructed homes across the city. Over a third of Milwaukee's 250,000 housing units were built before 1940. German Two-flats and Bungalows on the North side and "Polish Flats" on the South side still dominate the architecture and feel of many neighborhoods.

The nationally recognized Milwaukee Park system provides many and varied ways to experience the Beautiful. With its beginnings in the early 1900's, the County now supports 136 parks covering 15,000 acres. Originally developed to follow the Cities waterways as a "necklace of green", the system now includes walking distance parks in every Milwaukee neighborhood. Activity centers, band shells, senior or multi-generation education programs, splash pads, tennis and basketball courts are easily accessible in most neighborhoods. County Parks include 2 indoor pools, 4 family waterparks and 9 outdoor swimming pools. The Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory ("The Domes") is an example that continues to stand out among many award winning gardens, trails and arboretums. A unique footprint on the cityscape, the architecturally striking three beehive shaped domes cover over one acre of land, supporting separate ecosystems open to the public year round. A popular venue for parties, weddings, and field trips, the Domes also host educational programs for schools and a weekly Winter Farmers Market. Milwaukee Parks continue to adapt and change, finding new ways to serve the community even in the face of recent economic distress – county Park workers demonstrate great innovation and resilience in maintaining their legacy of providing beautiful community gathering places to Milwaukee citizens.

Theme 3: Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: Artists in Community.

Dialogue participants described artist's work and traditions as an imbedded dynamic that is closely tied to thriving in neighborhoods, community organizations, events, and collaborations. They did not spend much time discussing large or traditional venues or productions. Much of the conversation was around Milwaukee's small theater, music organizations, and neighborhood level art education programs. Predominant topics were festivals, local music, art instruction and the activities of over forty small theaters. Descriptions of innovation, like an artist's studio providing after-school instruction to children above a microbrewery, stood out in the conversation. An Art Museum outreach program of sending a van to Farmers Markets and Parks to deliver art education for children was used to describe thriving. Stories were shared of modest art projects being an effective way to transform public space. Replacing gang graffiti with murals was associated with decreased violence in one community. Painted, colorful koi fish on sidewalks illustrated a method for transforming a person's experience of otherwise plain cityscapes.

Small theater groups (Milwaukee has over forty) were often used as examples of how art is thriving in the city. Hundreds of volunteers work creating, promoting, and performing original works, activist messages, or up-dated presentations of classics. The activity of these groups transforms re-purposed storefronts, churches, and school auditoriums. Actors, production people and patrons create a palpable thriving buzz in bringing local theater to the city and its neighborhoods. And they have fun doing it.

Milwaukee artists are imbedded in its neighborhoods. There was some discussion about how the creative processes and being an artist can be painful or difficult in meeting the challenges of modern community life. Artists who participated in the dialogues described the paradox of feeling isolated as an “unserious profession” while also being called on to make creative contributions to many kinds of shared projects. Thriving by some local artists was described as an experience of occasional reward in the midst of the challenging struggle of supporting themselves while staying true to their vocation.

Practical Tools, Systems Access and Training

Examples: Peck School of the Arts; Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

Providing art education opportunities to all age groups was discussed at length. Neighborhood level access to arts infrastructure was a clear concern for dialogue groups. Artistic expertise and aesthetic awareness was seen as a vital (although not always acknowledged or rewarded) to many situations and particularly in creating compelling spaces and events.

Two centers, Peck School of the Arts at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design (MIAD) graduate hundreds of skilled Professional artists every year. Their programs, teachers and students have had a profound effect on Milwaukee’s shared experience of the Beautiful. With degrees in multiple disciplines of Fine Arts, Dance, Music and Theater, Peck maintains an enrollment of around 800 students and has been seeding Milwaukee communities with creative energy for over fifty years.

Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design offers multiple Fine Arts degrees including Communication Design, Drawing, Illustration, Industrial Design, Interior Architecture, Painting,

Photography, Printmaking, Sculpture and Time-Based Media. Thriving is experienced in Milwaukee through the presence, unique perspectives and contributions that its 100 faculty and 800 students bring to community projects and service-learning efforts with over 200 Milwaukee non-profits.

Affinity Groups /People in Service:

Examples: Playback Theatre; Riverwest 24.

Participants spoke about how shared missions, defined goals, and having fun can make the difference in bringing people together. Playback Theatre and the Riverwest 24 are two contrasting examples of how people with a shared sense of service create and build something lasting and beautiful.

Playback Theatre is a group of artists whose mission is to serve community through theatrical performance. Established in Milwaukee in 2010 as an improv group, they continue to grow through their ability to attract local artists and community members. Playbacks mission is to tell compelling and hopeful stories that promote positive outcomes for people lives and work to build a sense of urban community. What started four years ago as a Monthly activity for a few people has grown to regular performances, numerous workshops and a dozen Public School residencies around the city. Playback Theater now hosts monthly playshops, which are open to the public and give community people the opportunity to join Playback and also tell their stories of hope.

Riverwest 24 is an unusual urban bike race organized by many volunteers who work for weeks and sometimes months putting together this one-day, 24-hour event for the Riverwest

community. The event is about promoting biking and connecting people together with a beautiful and historic neighborhood. 130 biking teams (up to 800 riders) self organize for the event while dozens of community businesses and neighborhood groups set up 24 hours of block parties and activities that run during the race. Each team competitively gains points for laps around the neighborhood. A number of way stations along the racecourse award extra points for various activities including Mohawk haircuts and tattoos. The Riverwest 24 demonstrates a spirit of community pride, creative organizational strength, and shared purpose, all while promoting great fun in a beautiful and diverse neighborhood.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: First Stage

Participants mentioned a number of professional music and theatre groups in Milwaukee including Skylight Opera, The Rep, The Florentine Opera and The Milwaukee Ballet. All serve the community with performances and educational outreach. However, one organization, First Stage, demonstrates a sustained and thriving model for Milwaukee with its multiple programs that involve whole families. First Stage has grown to three locations in the area annually serving over 2000 students providing innovative plays for family audiences, theater training programs for young people, and education opportunities for schools and local groups. The second largest theatre academy for children in the United States, performance attendance exceeded 125,000 this year. First Stage, through theater training for the young, provides an environment of learning, health, purpose, resourcefulness, adaptability and positive outcomes for families in Milwaukee.

First Stage thrives with staff, children, teachers and parents who come together to create and learn from one another.

The Good

The Realm of Morality

Church's, philanthropy, volunteerism, and principles of conduct with one another.

Thriving Story:

Example: The Greater Milwaukee Foundation

A number of organizations have developed sustained approaches in providing community service. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation (GMF) acts in support of many efforts with a program that matches resources to community needs. GMF is a philanthropic organization that assists 1200 funds and donors in managing and focusing their charitable contributions.

Representing over \$500,000,000 in assets, GMF donors distribute over \$40,000,000 dollars yearly to area social service agencies and providers. Their long-standing mission is to encourage community-based partnerships that provide guidance and financial support to community leadership, area education programs, and neighborhood economic development efforts. The Foundation's vision and sustained multi-faceted support for many Milwaukee service organizations is a powerful story how people working together can deliver resources where they are most needed. GMF creates timeless legacies and partnerships designed to build and support Milwaukee communities.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Example: St. Michael's; Journey House

Dialogue participants described churches and community centers as sources of thriving where people gather, build connections, and get involved with projects of shared concern. Many such organizations quietly tie neighborhoods together with small staffs and minimal resources. St. Michael's parish serving a Lao, Hmong, African-Heritage and Mexican population on Milwaukee's North side represents an active but often under-reported gathering place. St. Michaels organizes and hosts daily and weekly social events and community programs and link city services to normally underserved and often invisible populations. St. Michael's is a key gathering place on Milwaukee's north side where people can find, get to know, and support one another.

Journey House, a community center serving the Clarke Square neighborhood on the near south side, has a successful history of volunteer supported family and youth programming. Collaborating in 2013 with Milwaukee County Parks and The Green Bay Packers, Journey House installed a professional grade football field using materials from the Packers Training facility in Green Bay. It is the first and only football stadium outside the NFL with an NFL logo, design and materials. Used by multiple High School and University teams, the site hosts Journey House's football, cheerleader, and fitness/character development programs for neighborhood kids ages 8-14. Journey House, and its new football stadium, is an exciting place for people to come and thrive together every day.

Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: All Peoples Church

Dialogue participants described how thriving occurs when people from differing communities connect with one another, identify shared interests, and develop trusting relationships. People experience thriving when they connect with people from other communities.

City Churches relying on financial and program support from more affluent suburban congregations is a common benevolent construct but also provides opportunities for people from different neighborhoods to get to know one another. Suburban-City Church partnerships were identified as a place where thriving occurs as people from two communities join together around a shared mission.

All Peoples Church (APC), located in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood works hard at creating new relationships with other groups and organizations. APC partners with suburban churches like St John's Lutheran, Brookfield and Christ Church Episcopal, Whitefish Bay, benevolent societies, including St. Vincent De Paul, and non profits organizations including Growing Power and Victory Gardens. They also open their doors to a number of organizations co-hosting numerous community events each Month. Youth programs in particular, like field trips and gardening projects, are supported through these partnerships. Thriving is experienced where concerned and hopeful people from different communities come together, share interests and resources, and find out how building new relationships makes a difference in their lives.

Practical Tools, System Access and Training:

Examples: Yoga; Zeidler Center for Public Discussion

Dialogue participants discussing Milwaukee's endowment of the Good, the realm of morality, spoke often about the growth and increased acceptance of previously non-traditional faith practices. Yoga, Shambhala Buddhism and meditative techniques were discussed at length. Yoga is one example that is providing personal tools and skills training to thousands of Milwaukee residents. Many come to the 40 Yoga studios, YMCA programs, Community Center classes or private instructors seeking exercise. Also taught are principles of thoughtfulness, mindfulness, self-discipline, personal liberation and morality. Yoga is being practiced every day in Milwaukee by thousands. Yoga is growing and contributes to how people live and is shaping new understandings of thriving in Milwaukee's shared experience.

Participants made regular reference to the usefulness of effective communication and listening skills for learning about one another. The ability to safely share ones personal experiences and commitments and learn those of others was described as "the heart of the matter" for building new and connected relationships that make a difference.

The Public Conversation Process (PCP) is an effective method made available through the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion. Used with the Thriving Cities dialogue groups, the Zeidler Center also conducts facilitated conversation programs with private and public organizations. Citywide conversations have been hosted recently on the challenging topics of poverty and segregation. The method is a unique and practical tool in supporting dialogue that encourages the sharing of individual perspectives. It gives participants the opportunity to both listen and be listened to in an atmosphere that respects differences. The goal of the conversations

is to not necessarily reach agreement, but to create the conditions where people can explore, better understand and learn to respect differing perspectives. The staff, volunteers, and trained facilitators of the Zeidler Center provide this timely, practical tool that supports thriving in Milwaukee by facilitating structured dialogues where people can deeply experience being listened to and listening to others. The process honors every person's beliefs and backgrounds in a safe atmosphere, while building understanding of one another through the sharing of experiences and core values that guide individual lives. Slowing down the conversation, listening to others, and being listened to, engenders new understandings for people. People experience thriving and a positive sense of purpose, when they can fully share with, and hear others, in a safe respectful space.

Affinity Groups/People in Service:

Example: Interfaith Earth Network

Multiple groups of concerned professionals and volunteers are working to address environment and sustainability issues in Milwaukee. One organization is figuring out how to combine concern for the environment with the opportunity of uniting people who have not regularly associated in the past. The Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee has operated for over 40 years delivering relationship-building dialogues and educational programs on topics of tolerance and social-justice. Interfaith's efforts support the work of many affinity groups operating within Milwaukee's realm of the Good. Their Earth Network is an example of a program that brings together individuals from different religious traditions that share a concern for the environment.

With multiple partners including the High Wind Association, Greenfaith, Urban Ecology Center, and Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light, the Earth Network is operated by volunteers from different faith-based backgrounds who plan and host events, workshops, tours, and presentations around topics of environmentalism and sustainable practices.

The Earth Networks Steering Committee and Board of Directors represent many and varied religious backgrounds and approaches to environmental issues. Their diversity is their strength as people otherwise separated by faith traditions are creating new opportunities, new associations and new programs in expressing their shared reverence and care for the environment.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee; Cultures of Giving

The Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee is a philanthropic organization that works to provide funding for social change and programs that put girls and women first in leading change efforts. Their story is about supporting and funding new approaches that focus on root causes of social, economic and environmental injustice.

The Women's Fund organizes philanthropic giving circles with groups traditionally underrepresented in the past. Their Cultures of Giving Program includes the African American Women's Fund Project, Her Scholarship, Latinas en Acción, Lesbian Fund, and Viv Ncaus: A Hmong Women's Giving Circle. Each group meets throughout the year shaping their unique mission, creating awareness for their cause, conducting fundraisers and allocating grants. One group raises funds for adult learner scholarships. Another helps fund an African- American

Leadership Program at a local University. Another supports a bi-lingual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) program for elementary and middle schoolgirls. The Women's Fund provides staff support and in many cases develops matching grants for the funds raised by the giving circles.

Within the Hmong Women's Giving Circles, Viv Ncaus, has become a powerful new change agent in their own community while also demonstrating a new approach for others. Their fundraisers and events represent a new presence of Hmong women who together, actively work for social justice causes. They fund programs that “address the root causes of gender inequality and create social change for all Hmong people who identify as women and girls.”

The Women's Fund is bringing a new, community based approach to the world of philanthropy in Milwaukee. Their programs support the power of local women who organize, fundraise and direct resources. The Women's Fund is committed to finding and addressing the root causes of social injustice. They are demonstrating new ways to support social change. They are creating new opportunities for girls, women, and Milwaukee to thrive.

The Just and Well Ordered

The Realm of Political and Civic Life

Governance and justice systems.

Thriving Story:

Example: MICAH 11 x 15

Change was a key topic for participants in their discussion of Milwaukee’s political and civic life. Thriving was often associated with the ways people come together around shared

community issues and values. Change in Milwaukee's criminal justice system shaped the conversation as thriving was correlated with multiple efforts by public servants and citizens to challenge and influence institutional norms and processes seen as unjust. Wisconsin currently has the highest incarceration rates in the nation for Black men. Milwaukee's ability to thrive and flourish now and in the future was directly linked to this and other justice issues. Many are working for change in our communities and government institutions.

Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA) is a diverse interfaith group that brings congregations together around justice issues impacting Milwaukee communities. Their influence goes beyond Milwaukee as they are affiliated with many faith-based social action groups around the State. MICAHA is working to mobilize congregations and citizens to the goal of cutting Wisconsin's prison population in half, from 22,000 to 11,000 by 2015. Called "The 11x15 Campaign," they're using multiple approaches with organizations and people in re-defining the idea of criminal justice reform as a moral issue critical to the future of Milwaukee communities and its citizens. MICAHA volunteers use their faith-based connections to organize public meetings, workshops, and media events with regular involvement by City and State officials. They advocate with Judges and District Attorneys seeking approaches to reduce technical recidivism rates associated with truth in sentencing, charging, and parole policies. MICAHA encourages citizens to examine how the incarceration of children, drug addicts and the mentally ill is a moral issue affecting the whole community. They are challenging Government leaders and criminal justice institutions to re-think old processes that work to support current incarceration practices that no longer reflect shared community values. MICAHA volunteers are challenging the old story of criminal justice in Milwaukee while working to build something

new. Their work, resourcefulness and ongoing commitment to re-education and just outcomes is a daily demonstration of what just, thriving qualities look like in the city and its communities.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Example: ACLU Youth Social Justice programs.

Dialogue participants discussed a number of themes about people involvement, particularly around the topics of youth engagement and education. They described how thriving is supported as young people learn about community. They talked about social justice teen camps and face-to-face civic education events as opportunities that, particularly with the participation of youth, create a thriving experience.

The American Civil Liberties Union of S.E. Wisconsin (ACLU) plans and conducts youth focused, alliance building programs and events in places around the city where young people are already gathered. They help form Student Associations at High Schools and Universities bringing students together around the topics of civil rights, liberties and responsibilities. The ACLU programs are a safe place for youth to gather, discuss, and learn about shared issues they think are important. The Public Arts Student Alliance, a partnership with Milwaukee Public Theatre, teaches young people research skills, creative writing, journalism, civics, public speaking, video and audio editing, and visual arts, while at the same time examining and discussing topics like violence and civic apathy/civic engagement. Students from this program conduct city wide Youth Justice Forums at local universities gathering hundreds of their peers to talk about civil rights, political activism, anti-bullying and other types of anti-oppression work.

This unique approach to education allows young people to thrive in a safe atmosphere that encourages civic engagement and activism. ACLU classes and workshops supports thriving as young citizens build relationships with one another while learning about social justice and developing civic engagement skills.

Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: Restorative justice

Thriving was seen in imaginative approaches to building or saving neighborhood level relationships. Providing youth a coherent understanding of what safe, just communities look like was also discussed as a key foundation for thriving.

In 1997, Milwaukee District Attorneys pioneered restorative justice programs for first-offence youth or non-violent offenders as alternatives to traditional incarceration practices. Since then, multiple restorative justice initiatives have been developed in Milwaukee for High School and neighborhood settings. Based on principles of mediation and reconciliation, these programs work to repair harm, restore relationships and build community instead of removing young people or non-violent first offenders to prisons. Restorative justice methods include giving attention to the ripple effects that crime can have on community. Milwaukee has multiple groups working to connect offenders with community representatives, that all look deeply at the ripple effects with the hope of restoring relationships, while also focusing on accountability and healing rather than punishment. Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and The Benedict Center represent two different but effective restorative justice programs among dozens being used in the city.

MPS has trained thousands of administrators, teachers, staff and students who use the practice of “repairing harm circles” to address issues of violence and bullying for students facing suspension for these or other issues associated with class performance or truancy. Restorative justice classes and activities have been directly associated with a drop in suspension rates at MPS.

The Benedict Center hosts three-hour Circles of Accountability that put juvenile burglary first offenders in the same room with surrogate victims and a diverse group of community people including other youth. Both perpetrators and community people share their different perspectives and feelings. It is through these kind of deeply connected conversations that offenders, community people, and peers establish new and hopeful perspectives that include the possibility for reparation and healing in contrast to isolation and punishment.

Youth-at-risk, first-time offenders, their families, schools and communities are experiencing positive outcomes because of restorative justice practices. Together they are creating new opportunities for people to thrive where in the past; punishment and isolation were the only available solution.

Practical Tools, System Access and Training:

Example: Safe and Sound

Safe and Sound is an organization providing tools, training and access to city resources with a vision of “Making Milwaukee neighborhoods safe places to work, live, and raise families”. A staff of seventeen program administrators and community organizers partner with over 20 neighborhood organizations, police, and judicial authorities delivering best practice

programs that blend youth development with neighborhood organizing and law enforcement. Safe and Sound provides training and assistance programs to neighborhoods serving over 20,000 children each year. In addition to their restorative justice work, Staff and organizers assist neighborhoods with Safe Places Music Programs, Safe practices for Neighborhood cleanups, Peace Making Circles, 3 on 3 basketball programs, Safe Night Youth events, and Safe Neighborhood Community walk events. Safe and Sound works with communities providing tested methods creating opportunities for people to thrive in safer, connected neighborhoods.

Affinity Groups/ People in Service:

Example: Martin Drive Neighborhood Association

The Martin Drive Neighborhood Association (MDNA) is a community organization on Milwaukee's North side demonstrating how neighbors working together on shared interests create a thriving experience for the whole community. Stewarding fifteen square blocks, volunteer's meet together regularly for planning, information sharing and to work on multiple events. They maintain a community website, facebook page, and produce a monthly newsletter distributed to each household promoting cooperative neighborhood cleanups, monthly Police Department information sessions, neighborhood beautification projects, and garden purchase coordination. Volunteers organize rummage sales, evening summer outdoor movies, and seasonal activities of caroling and placing red bows on neighborhood trees in December. There is an ever-present connection within the Martin Drive community that is sustained by a dedicated group of neighbors working in service to one another and beyond their neighborhood borders, in service to a thriving Milwaukee.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: LISC- Milwaukee

Throughout all the dialogues, participants described thriving experiences in specific neighborhoods and community centers. Five communities often mentioned were Harambee, Washington Park, Clarke Square, Lindsay Heights, and Layton Boulevard. These five share the support and organizational leadership of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation - Milwaukee (LISC). LISC is a demonstration model for the Just and Well-Ordered endowment because of the successful implementation of their Sustainable Communities Strategy. LISC could be regarded as a demonstration model in other Milwaukee endowments but their adaptive neighborhood programs, designed to address issues of equity and justice point to how LISC works to promote positive change in Milwaukee's realm of civic life.

LISC Milwaukee, part of a national organization, provides a comprehensive approach with its initiatives in the five neighborhoods they serve. Using best practice models developed in the Bronx and Chicago, LISC has created ongoing collaborative relationships between community partners, business leaders, policymakers, and philanthropic organizations. LISC assembles capital investors providing grants, loans, equity and technical assistance through their local community development organizations in each of the five communities.

In each neighborhood, LISC's model focuses on five distinct strategies which taken together demonstrate a comprehensive approach:

1. Expand investment in housing and real estate
2. Increase Family wealth and income
3. Stimulate economic activity
4. Improve access to quality education
5. Foster livable, safe and healthy environments

LISC has put together a system that encourages thriving by planning, organizing, leading, and implementing multiple activities around each of their strategies. As an example; housing rehab work is being accomplished on many homes in each neighborhood while at the same time LISC has started ACRE, an education program that prepares students for careers in Real Estate, Property, or Construction management. Space is limited in this narrative for additional details of LISC activities but one can point to each of the five communities and notice that through disciplined and concurrent introduction of varied strategies, they

- Have a thriving story based in hopeful yet pragmatic approaches
- Provide places and events that build community involvement
- Encourage communication between neighborhood groups
- Focus on delivering practical tools, methods and education opportunities
- Bring many and diverse groups together around service and shared interests
- Demonstrate replicable methods

LISC's Milwaukee communities work together and develop multiple ways to encourage active, coordinated civic engagement by neighborhood people. Their ability to model best practices that bring change to more challenging neighborhoods also suggests their methods and approach, if replicated, would lead to thriving results in other communities.

The Prosperous

The Realm of Economic Life

Commerce and enterprise

Thriving Story:

Example: The Valley

The economic resurgence and reclamation of the Menomonee Valley is one of many thriving stories, large and small, in Milwaukee's realm of the Prosperous. Dominating the downtown landscape (four miles long by ½ mile wide), its bridges join communities of the North and South sides while spanning a river valley that has been a central force in Milwaukee's economic history. The Valley represents historical cycles of prosperity, decline, and hopefulness for the people who have crossed the bridges, viewed the landscapes, or worked in its businesses and factories. Today, bold strategies and partnerships, along with individual and public commitments are shaping multiple economic opportunities as the Valley positions itself as a renewed icon of a thriving Milwaukee future.

The Valley's early history includes stories of Cream City brickyards, train yards, and manufacturing facilities that helped create the city's early reputation as "Machine Shop to the World." However, at the close of the 20th century, manufacturing waned and the centrally located Valley became increasingly known for its forsaken brownfields, its bridges a symbol of racial segregation.

A new story emerged in the late '90s as a comprehensive restoration plan was put into motion by business associations with the support of City and State agencies. Menomonee Valley Partners, a Public-Private non-profit group still provides facilitative leadership guiding the

Valley's re-emergence as a vital business and recreation/entertainment center in the heart of Milwaukee.

The project recently received the *One of the 10 Best Developments in the Nation* award from the Sierra Club for its sustainability practices, wastewater management practices and brownfield remediation. Forty-five acres of new parks and seven miles of trails have been established making the valley a destination location for bicycling and hiking. Newly built business centers have attracted over 40 new companies and 5200 jobs. Potawatomi Casino, the Harley-Davidson Museum, a revitalized Hank Aaron Trail, and the recently opened Urban Ecology Center are visible markers of a renewed prosperity and a new story of thriving from this central, visually dominant and historic city space.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Example: Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance

Important contributors to Milwaukee's economy are often obscured by more visible or famous corporate entities. Often associated with Beer and Motorcycles, the city is also the home of many multi-national headquarters including Manpower, Johnson Control, Rockwell International, GE Medical and Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance. Though not as publicized as Harley-Davidson or Miller Beer, these corporate entities have a profound impact on city life. Together they employ thousands, contributing to the cities economy in multiple ways while also playing the roles of corporate leadership from Milwaukee to hundreds of thousands employees across the globe.

Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance's (NWML) headquarters has been a dominant presence for over 150 years and now employs over 3600 people in the downtown area. In recent years, NWML re-committed to maintaining and growing its workforce and physical presence in Milwaukee with a \$300 million construction project involving the demolition of their current 15 story, 500,000 square foot residence and the new construction of a 32 story, 840,000 square foot Business center. NWML also plans to grow its downtown workforce to over 5000 employees.

NWML employees have been moved to temporary locations around the city clearing a path for the laborers and skilled tradespeople who are working to change Milwaukee's cityscape. In this project, a sense of thriving has been created with all the construction activity but also has much to do with citizens looking forward to a beautiful new downtown space that will provide economic opportunities and help to shape the city's future.

Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: Avenues West

There was much discussion about the importance of collaborations and how building associations create trust, safety, shared interests, and foster new opportunities among neighborhoods. For example, Avenues West Association (AWA) is a non-profit serving a large diverse area immediately adjacent to downtown. They have assembled a membership of over 50 organizations including local businesses, banks, real estate developers, local schools and Marquette University. AWA's works to support new development emphasizing strategies that build a more cohesive community identity for an area that includes densely populated neighborhoods, commercial business strips, a University, and the large corporate facilities of

Miller Beer and Harley-Davidson Motor Company. Their strategy is to create broad-based representation and cooperative planning for the whole area by hosting multiple and varied groups who work to build consensus around shared marketing, networking, and safety programs. In a given week, Avenues West hosts meetings for Business Improvement District activities in one neighborhood, a Landlord shared interest coalition, a business group initiative in a targeted investment zone, and a community meeting for the Neighborhood Night out program. Viewed collectively, the work of AWA is about relationship building and capitalizing on the synergy that comes when people and organizations get to know each other and learn how to support their shared community interests.

Practical Tools, System Access and Training:

Examples: Manufacturing and Transportation

There was much discussion about the correlation between training and transportation access to opportunities in Milwaukee's already thriving manufacturing sector.

Milwaukee has an established reputation for its blue-collar communities, skilled tradespeople and strong manufacturing employment base. With a "Milwaukee Iron" global reputation, metro factories and shops supply machinery, motorcycles, meters, mining equipment; automobile components, industrial controls, and hundreds of other manufactured products to domestic and export markets. Manufacturing employment accounts for 14% of all jobs in the city far exceeding Minneapolis (10%), Pittsburg (8%), or Chicago (10%). Manufacturing is a dominant influence on Milwaukee's economy and culture.

Dialogue participants discussed how a thriving manufacturing workforce is directly related to training opportunities and transportation access. Most jobs in this sector are located in the suburban ring of the metro requiring personal transportation to industrial parks. Entry-level training opportunities were also associated with thriving, as most entry-level manufacturing jobs require formal training and certification. Participants reported how creative, adaptive education and transportation solutions will be key determinants of continued thriving in this primary source of Milwaukee's economic prosperity.

Affinity Groups/ People in Service:

Example: WWBIC

Dialogue participants listed small businesses that connect to their neighborhood, unique local brands or products, and restaurants proudly listing locally sourced, fresh ingredients as examples of how thriving is seen in Milwaukee communities. During one of these discussions, a participant stated, "I work for WWBIC (Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation) and we work with every small business that's been mentioned." It was readily apparent this organization is deeply involved with many successful new business's in Milwaukee.

WWBIC is a small business economic development corporation that has helped over 1400 start-ups over the past 25 years. Although they operate with a statewide charter, their focus and success in supporting women owned and minority owned small business's makes them a significant thriving force in Milwaukee communities.

WWBIC provides loans that come with training, workshops, and other supportive resources that extend throughout the life of the loans. They combine professional and volunteer

experts in conducting site visits to determine client business needs such as accounting, HR, branding, or publicity. WWBIC also provides ongoing service through networking events, tips and tricks emails, online newsletters about their clients, and referrals to vendors, buyers or other contacts. WWBIC represent a powerful network dedicated to the success of Milwaukee small businesses and entrepreneurs. Their staff and volunteers often represent the key difference for those with a vision of economic independence. WWBIC provides the support entrepreneurs need for turning an idea into a new, thriving business.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: The Water Council

The Water Council, founded in 2007, is an association of water-technology companies, universities, local and State agencies, and international alliances that is re-branding Milwaukee as a global capital of water. Dialogue participants described how coherent strategies and public relation techniques help create and support a thriving environment. The Water Council has been effective at both in making Milwaukee the world's premier water-technology hub.

The City has a long history of water intensive industries beginning with its breweries, fur trade, tanneries, and meatpackers. Milwaukee now stands at the center of a region with over 150 water-technology companies including global giants A.O. Smith, Badger Meter, Kohler, Pentair, Siemens, and Veolia.

Building on a rich history of water technology development, the Water Council is creating partnerships between established industrial interests, universities, and research programs. With their support, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has started their

School of Freshwater Sciences, the first of its kind in the United States. The council has also put together a 50 million dollar grant from the National Science Foundation for Marquette and UWM to conduct water technology research in collaboration with six corporations. They are also providing support to innovators and entrepreneurs by offering grants and access to affordable office space at their Global Water Center facility on Milwaukee's near south side, a location also being developed to house UWM's Freshwater Science program.

In 2009, the Water Council was inducted into the UN Global Compact Cities Program in recognition of their regionally concentrated resources and expertise. These credentials support the acceptance of Milwaukee-based water-technology products and services in international markets. Beginning in 2007, The Water Council has hosted a Water Summit bringing together an international group of water technology companies, government representatives, universities, water utilities, investors, NGOs, Engineers, Researchers, Consultants, and students. This year's topic, "Thriving in the Global Water Economy," captures the Water Council's vision as they demonstrate how water, an historic Milwaukee resource, is leading to new thriving opportunities for prosperous growth in Milwaukee.

The True

The Realm of Knowledge

Educational resources

Thriving Story:

Example: St. Anthony

St. Anthony School serves 2000 primarily Spanish-speaking students and their families on Milwaukee's near south side. The school has grown by 150 students yearly for the past 10 years (400 students to 1900 students) to become the nation's largest K3-12 Catholic school. Something very different is happening at St. Anthony. They are an inner-city school serving a mostly Spanish-speaking population. They have a 96% daily attendance rate. Most of their graduates attend college. St. Anthony's students, teachers, administrators, and volunteers are figuring out how to combine faith-based and cultural traditions with rigorous academics. Their school includes a medical clinic, English programs for parents, early childhood literacy training, college preparatory programs, an International Baccalaureate program, and soccer teams for all ages.

St. Anthony's thriving story starts with family traditions, values, and close attention to the expressed needs of its students. Students receive Catholic theology instruction daily honoring the family expectations of their school's population. Students study both Spanish and English (reading, writing, and grammar) every day. Graduates leave prepared for college with a clear sense of their cultural traditions and skilled in at least two languages.

St. Anthony has a story to tell. It begins with creating and maintaining a learning environment that also embraces the culture of the students and their families. It's a story that

demonstrates high expectations and dedication to the well-being of every student. It's a story that values innovation while honoring beliefs that span generations and borders. St. Anthony has created a new and thriving story that starts with educators, children, and families working together for a better future while holding dear to the traditions they love.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Example: Dominican Center for Women

Dialogue participants spoke of community approaches involving whole families, social networks, non-profits, and non-traditional services that address specific educational needs.

The Dominican Center for Women, an agency serving the Amani neighborhood on Milwaukee's North side, matches tutors with neighborhood residents who have often been turned down by other education programs. Individualized instruction in reading, math, and writing skills is provided to people who are striving to be meaningfully educated and employed. Classes and programs in financial literacy, computer training, resume writing, music, poetry, home cooking, parenting skills, and healthy living are also hosted by the Center. Partnering with multiple agencies in the City, they also coordinate housing rehab, job and business development and crime prevention programs for the surrounding neighborhood.

You cannot see the people involvement at the Dominican Center by looking at a list of their programs and activities. One group participant described the GED program as a "transformative experience" for students and tutors. Thriving is experienced at the Dominican Center when people come together and work to help themselves in ways that also benefit the community. The Center offers a safe anchor for the neighborhood where residents can meet with

caring people and work on issues of education, safety, or housing - the kind of work that builds a hopeful future.

Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: Milwaukee Succeeds

Information sharing, identifying best practices and effective networking between educators seemed important to participants. There was little reference to public vs. private or charter vs. choice differences or distinctions. Some individual schools were reported as working better than others. Thriving was seen where educators have support systems and opportunities to learn from each other about what works for children.

For example, Milwaukee Succeeds is a program developed by civic and educational leaders, representing many institutions, coming together across organizations to find out what works for kids in schools. Their explicit goal is to set up and provide support networks that are available to the teachers, staff and administrators who work for Milwaukee's many and varied school organizations serving children across the city.

Milwaukee Succeeds provides coordination of four networks guided by six sigma coaches facilitating a data driven approach. Stakeholders and providers are meeting and looking at what programs and resources are currently being used in schools. Their goal is to identify the effectiveness of existing programs, learn about and support what works, or start something new to increase children's chances for success. Four networks have been formed and representatives meet regularly. The School Readiness Network is looking at early childhood programs and methods. The K-12 Academic Success Network is focusing on identifying and strengthening 3rd

grade literacy outcomes. The Postsecondary Success Network is identifying and sharing best practices for preparing and increasing the number of students who continue their education after High School. Lastly, the Non-Academic Support Network is identifying successful programs outside the classroom with the intent of strengthening the kind of extra-curricular help students and their families find most effective.

Milwaukee Succeeds has figured out how to bring hundreds of educators from dozens of organizations, both public and private, together and get them talking about what's working and what might improve the outcomes for children in Milwaukee's schools. They're using a network approach. Educators are talking and learning from each other. Together they are working to discover and provide the most effective approaches in helping children and schools thrive.

Practical Tools, System Access and Training:

Example: Engineering Programs.

Milwaukee is the home of hundreds of factories and production facilities and has a global reputation for the quality of its manufactured and machined products. Marquette University, UWM, and Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) are world-class schools helping to assure Milwaukee's continued success by providing fundamental and advanced education opportunities in multiple engineering disciplines.

At any given time there are over 6000 engineering students in Milwaukee studying topics ranging from medical robotics to wastewater treatment. Dozens of corporations like Harley-Davidson, Rockwell, Johnson Control, and GE Medical provide research funding and partnerships as part of educational programs grounded in real world needs. Hundreds of

internships deliver hands-on training and potential career-paths for students. Marquette recently built a 115,000 square foot Discovery Learning Complex for their students with open labs that encourage multi-discipline approaches to engineering challenges. UWM and Marquette recently received a grant from the National Science Foundation to form an Industry and University Cooperative Research Center to advance freshwater research in support of the economic growth already started by Milwaukee's water technology industries and the locally based Water Council.

Engineers, and the schools they come from, have a long, often overlooked history of flourishing, adapting and consistently contributing to Milwaukee's shared experience. Engineers aren't usually flashy. Quite often low key and pragmatic, engineers are the people that give form to innovative ideas and the new products that create jobs in Milwaukee's businesses and factories. The city's engineering schools, and the students they send into the community are a key component to everything that thrives in Milwaukee.

Affinity Groups/ People in Service:

Examples: Urban Underground; Public Allies.

Two organizations, Public Allies and The Urban Underground, were often mentioned by dialogue participants as organizations where visible and positive change is happening for aspiring young leaders. Both groups work to combine learning with making a difference through community service.

Urban Underground is an agency on Milwaukee's North side that delivers multiple programs designed to raise awareness about educational needs and issues of racism affecting city children. They engage youth in identifying and developing the kind of leadership skills that serve

themselves, their peers, and their community. Urban Underground works with hundreds of young people from multiple schools. Their flagship program, the Youth Empowerment Project gathers a force of 30-40 young servant-leaders who work together for a year. Student's meet weekly to develop and deliver community projects while participating in leadership trainings and other learning opportunities around the city. A main project this year involves creating a downloadable phone application called Youth Map. When completed, it will make provide young people a method for finding activities, programs and services around the city using special filters like price, location, and hours of operation. Young people will have a one-stop information source for City healthcare, sports, music and education resources with links to bus routes. The youth of Urban Underground have been delivering community-building projects for years and a network of Alumni is established throughout Milwaukee supporting each year's new class of leaders in service.

Public Allies – Milwaukee, an AmeriCorps agency, places young leaders into full-time paid apprenticeships with non-profits while also providing intensive leadership skills training, personal coaching, all coupled with community-building projects. Over thirty Allies work four days a week at over twenty Milwaukee agencies. Fridays are leadership training days and Saturdays the Allies work together on various community service projects around the city. Over the years they have become a visible and consistent force for positive change. Public Allies is an organization that takes their motto “Everyone Leads” very seriously. The group reflects a commitment to an inclusive representation of men, women, people of color, and people who identify as LGBTQ. Together, they demonstrate how a diverse force works together for change in the city. Milwaukee has over 400 alumni, many still working in the public sector while

maintaining the associations and friendships they started together in service. “Everyone Leads” at Public Allies and Milwaukee thrives as a result.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: Urban Ecology Center

The Urban Ecology Center (UEC) began in 1991 with a group of citizens concerned about a failing neighborhood park. Crime, litter and invasive plants had taken their toll. An idea was born that they could reclaim the park by cleaning it up and in the process teach students from the neighborhood about nature and science. In 2004, after twelve years of operating out of trailers they opened a new Environmental community center. Located at Riverside Park the center is equipped with science themed classrooms and multi-use spaces for community potlucks, meetings, lectures, and programs. In the past ten years, two additional facilities have opened. One is on a lake at Washington Park on Milwaukee's west side and the other in the Menomonee Valley on the banks of its river adjoining the Hank Aaron trail. UEC currently works with over 40 schools delivering environmentally grounded science curriculums.

A unique synergy happens when educators and students are together under one roof with people who work at research, land stewardship, reclamation, summer camps, and community programs. Their collaborations and hard work have led to greatly improved quality in the three rivers that help define Milwaukee's landscape. Neighboring parks receive stewardship and care through student and community projects while providing outdoor research opportunities. The crime rate around their facilities has been significantly reduced. A thriving, busy, family friendly community center has been created around topics of ecology and the environment.

A signal project is the recently opened Rotary arboretum on the shores of the Milwaukee River. A reclaimed brownfield, it is now a beautiful Park that is well worth the short walk from downtown. Over the course of seven years, the project was an opportunity for students, neighborhood people and business interests to work and learn together in re-claiming and creating a beautiful space that will enhance the cities landscape for generations to come. The UEC is creating new stories like this every day. Their clear vision and systematic approach attracts a diversity of people who find common interest in re-defining what community involvement, science education, recreation, and environmental activism can look like in Milwaukee.

The Sustainable

The Realm of Natural Resources, Health, the Environment

Sustainability and the environment.

Thriving Story:

Example: Victory Garden Initiative

Community gardens and the home gardening movement were discussed often as participants described thriving experiences in the city. Slow food, potlucks among neighbors, eating healthy, outdoor activities, urban farming, locally sourced food for restaurants –discussion of these thriving elements relating to community garden projects or raised bed gardens was a consistent theme across all dialogue groups.

Building a home and neighborhood based food system is a key component of Victory Gardens powerful vision for a thriving Milwaukee. Their story is one of justice, nutrition, sustainability, security, and regaining individual and community control over food. They work to demonstrate how slowing down our relationship with the natural environment, and with food, helps create the conditions for a good and sustainable life. If fast, processed food works to support the culture we now have, perhaps slow, local fresh food will help contribute to a culture that better reflects our true wants and needs.

Victory Garden has a big vision of change to the Milwaukee's food system that will require the work of many generations. They are working toward this vision in many ways including a current emphasis on building new gardens and orchards around Milwaukee. For the past five years they've run a program in May called The Blitz installing raised beds in backyards and neighborhoods across the city. This year, over a two-week period, using group purchasing power and volunteer labor over 500 raised-bed vegetable gardens were installed complete with high quality compost and soil. Earlier in the spring, new fruit and nut orchards of 30 trees each were awarded to six community organizations.

Victory Gardens is creating a new story. It's a story that's reshaping the way Milwaukee people and communities think about and relate to their food. It's a story involving volunteers who share a dream of food independence and who are willing to do the hard work that leads to change. It's a story of neighbors getting to know one another as they work in their gardens. It's a story of growing healthy food where there wasn't anything growing before.

People Involvement, Places and Eventfulness:

Example: Riverwest Cooperatives

Dialogue participants discussed how sharing healthy meals, innovative approaches, gathering together, changing the status quo, and supporting local food sources are all indicators of what thriving looks like in the realm of the Sustainable. The Riverwest Co-op and Café operates in a Milwaukee neighborhood and is often described as an oasis, a neighborhood hub and a community center.

The Co-op opened its doors in 2001 with the mission of providing “Food for People, Not for Profit” and has grown to over 3000 members and hundreds of volunteers. In 2004 they opened the Café which serves vegetarian and vegan meals daily and is operated using a unique mix of staff and volunteers. Volunteers earn price discounts by working at the store and the Café, which also help lower prices and costs for everyone. Café volunteers also trade hours for meals developing close friendships while preparing healthy food for neighbors. Many volunteers move to Riverwest just to be near the Co-op with its social, community-oriented environment.

The Co-op has inspired the birth of other co-op success stories. Riverwest Public House Cooperative is an owner-operated, democratically governed pub with the mission of providing a welcoming social meeting place. A portion of the generated revenue goes toward developing other owner-operated ventures through The Riverwest Cooperative Alliance. The Alliance currently gives support to a co-op study group, The People’s Book Store and SolarRiver West, a co-op that is forming to bring new energy opportunities to the community.

Riverwest Co-op puts people together. It’s a place that reminds you how sharing a meal or a drink with a neighbor can sometimes also be an expression of shared values and shared

vision. They have created a place that stands for equality and fairness while giving people an opportunity to eat healthy food and build relationships.

Communication between Formal or Informal Groups:

Example: Milwaukee Environmental Consortium

The Milwaukee Environmental Consortium (MEC) fosters communication, collaborations, efficiencies and best practices by providing open, welcoming and shared workspace to organizations working with or offering programs on environmental sustainability or remediation efforts.

Over twenty businesses and associations share space at MEC. Business models and approaches are greatly varied. Some people work with youth building boats. Another group installs rain-gardens in residential neighborhoods working with AmeriCorps staff. Another plants trees and orchards with the help of volunteers. The Islamic Environmental Group of Wisconsin coordinates their efforts out of MEC. There are many organizations working to reclaim and renew Milwaukee's river and estuary system. MEC has created a place where people of diverse backgrounds and interests have the opportunity to learn and build relationships by putting themselves together in a non-competitive environment. The collegial atmosphere promotes conversations around best practices, current work, events and shared interests. Staff working for these usually small organizations can find help with practical and mundane tasks, like printing or computer technology. MEC connects people. Thriving happens in this space as those who care about shared environmental concerns experience the power of building relationships and networks of support.

Practical Tools, System Access, and Training:

Example: Alice's Garden

From the street, Alice's Garden appears as a plot of land, just about the size of a block. It sits next to an elementary school in the heart of Milwaukee's North side. One can see dozens of raised beds, a small sheltered pavilion and broad gravel walks. At one end is a narrow path wandering through a maze of herbs and next to that, a grassy area surrounded by flowering bushes. But Alice's Garden is much more than an outdoor vegetable and herb garden.

Alice's Garden hosts or partners with many groups providing activities and programs to Milwaukee families. One of these programs, SeedFolks Youth Ministry, started in 1997 and continues to provide cultural, spiritual, educational, and environmental trainings and events to children, youth and their families. The Good Brown Earth is a garden urban immersion program for youth combining a cultural and spiritual component with urban gardening. Alice's Garden also hosts regular Yoga classes. There is a Minister-in-residence who leads reflective activities in an herb-lined labyrinth. Drum circles, gardening classes, potlucks, cooking classes, a horticulture club and regular day camps all convene throughout the planting, growing and harvest seasons. The garden also hosts a Milwaukee Cooperative Extension Youth Development pilot program that hires young men who grow fresh vegetables for sale in two local corner stores. Organic, herbal beauty products are produced and sold at local public markets.

Alice's Garden is a beautiful shared space where scores of people rent and cultivate vegetable plots and enjoy the many benefits of outdoor urban farming. Much more than a garden space, Alice's Garden provides a place where people of all ages and backgrounds find tools,

programs, trainings, and social events that link them to the earth, sustainable practices, and neighbors who share that interest.

Affinity Groups/ People in Service:

Example: Kinnickinnic River Reclamation Project

The Kinnickinnic River (KK) reclamation project on Milwaukee's south side is a continuing demonstration of how concerned volunteers, neighbors, and local leaders can work together to address complex environmental problems and change the face of a community. The participants listed a number of active organizations working on river reclamation. They described how youth involvement, a neighborhood focus, and a shared vision coupled with action steps creates new and thriving opportunities in Milwaukee communities.

The KK reclamation project is a large-scale redesign of urban landscape costing millions of dollars over the course of many years. It represents multiple improvements in the realm of sustainability but a key component of thriving is found in the ways local citizens, agencies and volunteers have come together to assure the community bordering the river is actively involved with every step of the process.

Fifty years ago the KK riverbed was lined with concrete and its natural ecology destroyed. Plants and fish quickly disappeared as the KK turned into a dangerous, open sewer. What had been a healthy river, feeding into the Milwaukee estuary system, became a large unsightly drainage ditch that regularly overflowed its banks flooding over 300 homes.

As part of the reclamation project, the concrete was removed over long stretches of the KK. Community members have met regularly over the past five years with environmental

agencies and service groups, participating in planning and learning practical ways to support the restoration. Dozens of rain barrels and rain gardens have been installed in neighborhood homes lining the river to help control storm water drainage. The work of regular Saturday projects, involving hundreds of volunteers, has returned indigenous natural foliage and trees to the landscape. Local committees meet regularly to help design the new urban bike paths and architectural features that are beginning to line this new community space. Neighborhood people and concerned environmentalists are saving a river on Milwaukee's south side. This past Fall, fishermen were seen catching salmon from the KK's banks for the first time in over fifty years.

Demonstration Models, Sustained Systems:

Example: Growing Power

Growing Power is a non-profit that operates a nationally recognized community food system model in Milwaukee. Their Community Food Centers grow, source and distribute healthy, quality, safe, affordable, fresh fruits, vegetables, fish and meat to people in both urban and rural communities. Their prototype Food Center, located on a two-acre urban farm on Milwaukee's North side, includes greenhouses, a fishery, chickens, goats, ducks, rabbits, and bees. They provide hands-on training, demonstrations, and technical assistance to local communities and across the country through satellite training sites in Mississippi, Kentucky, Georgia, Arkansas, and Massachusetts.

Growing Power's work falls into three program areas.

1. Growing projects and methods - Growing Power works to figure out practical solutions to urban farming challenges and their farms are set up to provide hands-on demonstrations where people can work and learn new methods.
2. Education and technical assistance. Growing Power teaches and presents at local, national and international forums and conventions on topics of sustainable urban farming and food distribution. They run multiple youth programs. They work with policy makers on agriculture issues.
3. Food production and distribution. Growing Power produces and distributes food grown at its urban and rural sites and distributes food supplied by a network of 300 small family farms (the Rainbow Farmers Cooperative) through its farm-to-city Market Basket Cooperative.

Growing Power and its founder Will Allen are globally recognized for their pioneering work and the teaching they provide on urban agriculture and food distribution systems. Will Allen is a recipient of the McArthur Foundation “genius grant”, a member of the Clinton Global Initiative, and is a regular consultant to Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” program to reverse childhood obesity.

The hard work of Growing Power creates thriving in Milwaukee. The fruit of their labor is about helping others to have the same opportunity. They are figuring out the hands-on practical solutions and processes needed to bring healthy, affordable food to communities. They are teaching what they’ve learned by building relationships and setting up local, regional and national networks. Growing Power demonstrates the power a community can gain from a

thriving, healthy food system. And they work to assure others have an opportunity to share in that power.

Afterword

“A tenet of the market economy is that no matter how much you have, it is not enough.”

-Peter Block

In Milwaukee today, thinking about thriving has created a buzz. The series of public dialogues shaped this profile in a powerful way. The planning, facilitation, and then the engaged conversations of one hundred participants contributed much to its form and content. Participants were pleased and excited to listen to one another about what’s thriving in Milwaukee. There have been Public Radio programs about The Thriving Cities Project and Public Dialogues. Milwaukee people are continuing to talk and think about thriving in new ways.

Each endowment and theme presented unique writing challenges. For many of the endowments, the examples used for Thriving Story and Demonstration Model could be interchanged. Story is a key component of any lasting demonstration model, and good demonstration models always come with a powerful story. Writing about the endowments of The Beautiful and The Sustainable seemed a little easier than the others. Milwaukee has a rich and diverse cultural heritage to draw upon and there is much passion and creative work that is grounded in a new environmental awareness. Writing about The Good and The True seemed a little more difficult. Many education systems operate in Milwaukee. In most cities the education

of children is very challenged these days. It should be noted that St. Anthony, the example used to illustrate the Thriving Story theme, is a private school receiving public funds under the Choice program. In talking about education, dialogue groups didn't make much distinction around public or private, Choice or Charter programs. The endowment of the Good presented different challenges. The Greater Milwaukee Foundation was the example used for a Thriving Story. They do great work but some might point to problematic concerns that philanthropy systems function to keep a scarce resources paradigm in place. It can also be noted that many thriving examples could be used as examples of other themes and endowments. For instance, The Great Lakes Water Council was considered for Demonstration Model in the realm of The True instead of the realm of The Prosperous. The Urban Ecology Center was considered for multiple examples including Thriving Story in the realm of The True or The Sustainable.

Many questions remain. What is the role of leadership when viewed in the context of a thriving human ecosystem? What of the paradox created when stories of thriving and connection don't match up to the scarcity paradigm of anxiety, accumulation and violence that influences people's daily experience? How is thriving accounted for in communities that have been abandoned to the bottom rung - the neighborhoods set aside for the victims of a prevailing scarcity based economic system.

Walter Brueggemann describes how the scarcity myth, the prevailing story in this culture, is designed around the tenets of anxiety, accumulation, monopoly, and violence. Throughout this research and dialogue process people reported an increasing awareness of a real disconnect between their personal values and good experiences in daily life and the scarcity story provided

by this cultures institutions. People are eager for clarity and more opportunities to use the language and mythology, the story, of connectedness and thriving.

This research evokes questions about many cultural institutions. What is the role of leadership? Most education and training on leadership topics presume a scarcity paradigm. Peter Block and John McKnight are working on the notion of “associational life” that might provide insight or a starting point in looking at evolved leadership dynamics in connected, thriving communities.

There are paradox issues to be sorted through. This profile highlights thirty-six organizations or groups that were held up as examples of what thriving looks like. They all uniquely display thriving qualities yet are able to function almost in spite of a prevailing scarcity paradigm.

The intention of this profile was to describe how and where thriving is seen and experienced in Milwaukee. Public dialogues gave people an unusual chance to talk and listen to one another about what’s going well in the “endowments” of their City. They noticed thriving in neighborhoods and groups, organizations and events. Thriving showed up in the actions of artists and business people, teachers and community organizers. Thriving was seen in adaptive and creative approaches that engage new resources. It was also seen as a set of values and attitudes not often measured or reported.

People have been intrigued and pleased to think about Milwaukee as a human ecosystem. They have enjoyed imagining their city as a complex set of connections that come together to create a shared reality. It’s been eight months of listening to Milwaukee people talk about what’s

thriving in their lives. It's been a unique journey to a place I could never go to alone and with blessings I never before could have imagined.

Links

Foreword

Walter Brueggemann – Empire of Scarcity

Milwaukee, November 2, 2011

<http://www.marquette.edu/cps/BuildingaBetterMilwaukeeBrueggemann.shtml>

Peter Block – The Neighborhood is the Wilderness

Milwaukee, November 2, 2011

<http://www.marquette.edu/cps/BuildingaBetterMilwaukeeBlock.shtml>

The Beautiful

Parks System

<http://county.milwaukee.gov/Parks>

Peck School of the Arts

<http://www4.uwm.edu/psoa/>

Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design

<http://www.miad.edu/>

Playback Theatre

<http://www.playbackmilwaukee.com/p/welcome.html>

Riverwest 24

<http://www.riverwest24.com/>

First Stage

<http://www.firststage.org/>

The Good

Women's Fund Cultures of Giving

<http://womensfundmke.org/>

St. Michaels, Journey House

<http://stmichaelmilwaukee.org/>

<http://www.journeyhouse.org>

All Peoples Church

<http://www.allpeoplesgathering.org/>

Yoga. Zeidler Center for Public Discussion

<http://omtownyogis.org/>

<http://zeidlercenter.org/>

Interfaith Earth Network

<http://www.interfaithconference.org/cms-view-page.php?page=earth-network>

Greater Milwaukee Foundation

<http://www.greatermilwaukeefoundation.org/>

The Just and Well-Ordered

MICAH

<http://www.micahempowers.org/>

ACLU Youth Social Justice Programs

<http://www.aclu-wi.org/community-education>

Restorative Justice. MPS. Safe and Sound

http://interfaithconference.org/interfaithconference/site_files/editor_files/image/file/Interfaith.RJP_in_MPS.Dedinsky.pdf

<http://www.benedictcenter.org/Circles%20and%20Restorative%20Justice>

Safe and Sound

<http://www.safesound.org/>

Martin Drive Neighborhood Association

<http://www.martin-drive.org/>

LISC Milwaukee

<http://www.lisc.org/milwaukee/>

The Prosperous

The Valley

<http://www.renewthevalley.org/>

NWML Tower

<http://www.northwesternmutual.com/news-room/milwaukee-development.aspx>

Avenues West

<http://www.avenueswest.com/>

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation

<https://www.wwbic.com/>

The Water Council

<http://www.thewatercouncil.com/about/overviewhistory/>

The True

St. Anthony

<http://www.stanthonymilwaukee.org/>

Dominican Center for Women

<http://www.dominican-center.org/>

Milwaukee Succeeds

<http://milwaueesucceeds.org/>

Engineering. UWM. MSOE. Marquette

<http://uwm.edu/engineering/>

<http://www.msoe.edu/welcome>

<http://www.marquette.edu/eng/>

Urban Underground. Public Allies

<http://urbanmilwaukee.com/2013/08/20/mapping-milwaukee-for-teens/>

<http://www.publicallies.org/site/c.liKUL3PNLvF/b.3158815/k.EC9F/Milwaukee.htm>

Urban Ecology Center

<http://urbanecologycenter.org/>

The Sustainable

Victory Garden Initiative

<http://victorygardeninitiative.org/>

Riverwest Co-Ops

<http://www.riverwestcoop.org/>

Milwaukee Environmental Consortium

<http://www.milwaukeeenvironmentalconsortium.org/>

Alice's Garden

<http://www.alicesgardenmilwaukee.com/>

Kinnickinnic Reclamation

<http://www.smithgroupjir.com/projects/kinnickinnic-river-corridor-neighborhood-plan>

Growing Power

<http://www.growingpower.org/>

Afterword

Walter Brueggemann – Empire of Scarcity

Milwaukee, November 2, 2011

<http://www.marquette.edu/cps/BuildingaBetterMilwaukeeBrueggemann.shtml>